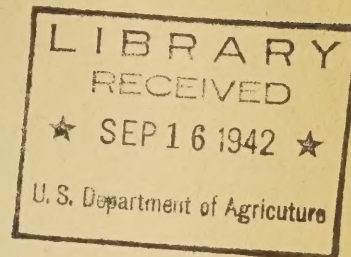


1.941
R3B12
Reserve

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

1.941
R3B12
Reserve



BACKGROUNDS OF THE WAR FARM LABOR PROBLEM

Prepared by the
U.S. Bureau of Agricultural Economics
and the
Farm Security Administration

May 1942
Washington, D. C.

USDA
LIB

Committee in charge:

N. Gregory Silvermaster (FSA)*
 Josiah C. Folsom (BAE)
 William T. Ham (BAE), Chairman

List of Contributors:

Bureau of Agricultural Economics

Glen T. Barton
 Josiah C. Folsom
 William T. Ham
 Ernest J. Holcomb
 R. S. Kifer

Farm Security Administration

Earl R. Beckner
 E. Myles Cooper
 Nelson H. Cruikshank
 Samuel Liss
 Margaret L. Magnusson
 Edward J. Rowell
 Isadore Salkind
 Richard Sasuly

*The FSA was originally represented on this Committee
 by Mercer G. Evans and later by Earl R. Beckner.

NOV 9 1942

C O N T E N T S

INTRODUCTION

PART ONE

	Page
I. PROBLEMS OF FARM LABOR	4
II. FACTORS BEHIND FARM LABOR PROBLEMS	5
A. Technology	6
B. Lost Markets	7
C. Trends in Farm Population	8
D. The Agricultural Ladder.	8
E. Industrial Employment and Farm Income.	10
III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	11
A. Regulation of Wages.	11
B. Stabilization of Farm Employment	11
C. Legal Protection of Economic, Civil and Political Rights	12
D. Public Assistance Programs	12
E. Special Programs for Agricultural Workers	13
F. Expansion of Industrial Opportunities in Post-War Planning . .	13

PART TWO

I. A DESCRIPTION OF FARM LABOR.	15
A. Number and Distribution of Farm Laborers	15
1. Trends in Employment	15
2. Geographic Distribution	22
B. Characteristics.	32
1. Racial and National Origins.	32
2. Age and Sex Groups	32
3. Dependents	32
4. Place of Residence	34
5. Previous Work Experience and Occupational Training	34
6. Previous Farm Tenure Status.	34
7. Classes of Hired Farm Laborers	35

	Page
C. Women and Child Workers	37
1. Women in Farm Work.	37
2. Child Labor on Farms: Extent	39
3. Effects on Children	42
4. Regulation of Child Labor in Agriculture.	43
D. Sharecroppers	45
1. A Type of Farm Labor.	45
2. Incomes of Croppers and Wage Hands.	47
3. Causes of Low Income.	49
4. Instability of Tenure	51
5. Deterioration of Tenure Status.	52
6. Displacement	53
7. Racial Characteristics.	54
E. The Hired Man	57
F. Migratory Agricultural Workers.	59
1. Growth of the Agricultural Migratory Labor Force.	59
2. Areas of Demand	59
3. Sources of Supply	60
4. Types of Movement	60
5. Number and Characteristics.	61
6. The Main Streams of Migration	63
7. Problems.	72
II. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STATUS OF FARM WAGE WORKERS	87
A. Earnings and Incomes.	87
1. Incomes and Levels of Living.	87
2. Wage Rates.	91
3. Time-Rates vs. Piece-Rates.	91
4. Speed of Work	94
5. Variations in Regional Wage Rates	95
6. Forms of Wage Payment	95
B. Causes of Inadequate Employment	96
1. Seasonality of Work	96
2. Climatic Conditions	97
3. Marketing Conditions.	97
4. Hours of Work	98
5. Labor Turnover.	101
6. Inefficient Recruiting	102
C. Wage Payments and Collections	102
D. Housing	104
1. Typical Areas	104
2. Regulation of Farm Workers' Housing.	106
3. Federal Housing for Agricultural Workers.	107

	Page
E. Food and Subsistence	110
F. Health	112
1. Relationship between Health and Housing	112
2. Medical Aid for Migratory Farm Workers	113
 <u>PART THREE</u> 	
I. THE FARM LABOR MARKET	117
A. Men and Jobs	117
1. Hiring Practices	117
2. The Labor Contractor	122
3. The Employment Committee	126
B. Methods of Supervision of Farm Labor	127
C. Farm Placement and Stabilization of Employment	131
1. Development of the Farm Placement Service	132
2. The Need for Regularizing Farm Labor Demand	135
D. Collective Bargaining	138
1. Factors Retarding Union Organization	139
2. Development of Farm Labor Unions	140
3. Strikes and Employer-Union Relationships	155
4. Other Union Activities	158
II. LEGISLATIVE PROTECTION	159
A. Wage Regulation	159
1. Government Regulation in Other English-speaking Nations	160
2. Government Regulation in the United States	163
3. Non-Governmental Regulation	165
4. Summary of Experience with Wage Regulation	167
B. Wage Payments and Collections	170
C. Hours of Work	171
D. Workmen's Compensation Laws	172
E. Social Insurance	176
1. Unemployment Compensation	178
2. Old-Age Insurance	182

BACKGROUNDS OF THE WAR FARM LABOR PROBLEM

INTRODUCTION

The report on farm labor in the United States which follows is the work of several agencies of the Department of Agriculture, particularly the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and the Farm Security Administration. The main purpose of the cooperating agencies has been to assemble in a single study the most important facts about the highly varied conditions of farm employment. Much has been written on the subject already but most of this has covered isolated or special aspects of the many problems in the farm labor field. It was felt, therefore, that an over-all study would be of value.

The project was conceived before the declaration of a state of emergency and before the beginning of large-scale defense preparations in America. The bulk of the work was done before the outbreak of war on December 7, 1941. Hence the emphasis is on long term problems, problems which were of importance throughout the preceding decade and are still of importance today.

The beginnings of the defense program brought about changes in the farm labor situation. These changes were crystallized into clean-cut form by the actual declaration of war. However, it would be a mistake to assume that the problems of farm labor are now entirely different because of the changes resulting from the present war effort. Not only is there a very real and tangible connection between what happened in the field of farm labor a few years ago and what is happening today, but also it is impossible to solve adequately the pressing problems of today without looking beneath the surface for main causes.

The farm labor situation may be described broadly in terms of labor supply. Throughout the 1930's there was an oversupply of farm labor; today there is much concern over possible shortages. A few years ago it was the social responsibility of government to do something about the worst effects of an oversupply of farm labor. Today it is a wartime necessity to prevent shortages of labor from holding back the farm production which is an essential part of the war program.

The change from a surplus labor market in agriculture to one of comparative stringency has its counterpart in other industries and throughout most of our economy. There are, however, significant differences. The oversupply of labor in agriculture was probably greater than in other industries and the social effects were worse. Conversely, the most frequent complaints about labor shortages have come from the farming community. Moreover, while other industries have expressed apprehension over shortages chiefly of specialized and skilled workers, agriculture has been faced with a depleted and understocked labor market in all categories of skill.

There is a close relationship between the large oversupplies of agricultural labor in the recent past and the current fears of insufficient labor. Extreme competition among workers in a chaotic labor market has contributed to the depressing of the status of farm workers below the accepted American standards of decent living. Farm wages are well below those in industry. They increased somewhat during 1941, but did little more than keep pace with industrial wages, which also rose. If there has been any exodus of wage labor out of agriculture since the beginning of 1941 it must be taken as a sign that those who work for hire in agriculture do not have the conditions of life and work which make urban employment more attractive. The same differentials between agricultural and industrial employment existed during the depression of the 1930's but they had negligible effect as long as there was little chance for a farm worker to get a steady factory job.

The fact that farm wages are rising today (1942) is an indication that some sort of partial adjustment is being made. But no coordinated program has been developed to give farm laborers the kind of stakes in their jobs which would keep them attached to the agricultural industry and thus guarantee farm production. The need of such a program is clear from the fears which have been expressed over the farm labor supply situation.

No precise measurement of the supply of farm labor relative to the demand exists. However, trends are clearly visible. During the 1930's there were consistently more farm workers seeking farm employment than there were jobs on farms. Labor shortages did occur in agriculture, to be sure, but they were temporary and local in nature and resulted almost entirely from bad distribution of an ample labor force.

With the 1941 crop season, as a result of the general increase in economic activity, the trend toward scarcity of farm labor set in markedly. Many alarming reports of impending shortages of farm labor were issued. At the end of the 1941 harvests, it was apparent that much of the clamor about shortages was exaggerated and unwarranted. But it was also clear that in some areas, for example, in regions close to concentrations of war industry in such states as New York, Connecticut and New Jersey, there was genuine difficulty in obtaining sufficient labor. The reasons for this reversal of trend were evidently the increase of employment in war industries and to a lesser extent the absorption of manpower into the armed forces. Many former farm workers went into jobs vacated by persons who found jobs in war-production industries.

It is to be expected that these two drains on the farm labor force will continue through 1942 and as long as the war lasts. As a consequence it is to be expected that the number of local shortages of farm labor will increase, particularly near the centers of war industries. However, there was no indication at the end of 1941 of a general shortage of farm labor which would limit farm production to any marked extent. There are still several millions of unemployed

workers, many of them temporarily unemployed as a result of the conversion from the production of consumer goods to the production of implements of war. At the point where the normal labor reserves of industry are exhausted--and this point may not be too distant--real stringency may be expected to occur in the farm labor market.

The reasons for the difficulties in getting sufficient farm labor are revealed by a study of the record of the past decade. The proper remedies are determined by the nature of the sore spots. The need of adjustments which will render the farm labor force a stable, productive group is obvious and pressing.

Agriculture is being called upon to break production records in a wide variety of crops as its share in the winning of the war. Much of this production will have to come from large commercial farms which are dependent on hired labor. To stabilize the needed hired labor force may require positive action based on knowledge of the farm labor situation over a period of years.

PART ONE

I. PROBLEMS OF FARM LABOR

To catalogue the disadvantages of the status of farm laborers is in effect to describe their living and working conditions. There are few respects in which farm labor is not at the bottom of the scale among the gainfully employed.

Farm wages are in most instances lower than the lowest wages paid for unskilled labor in industry. Earnings of farm workers are even lower than would be indicated by wage rates because of short periods of employment during the year.

Farm wage rates have risen during the past year, (1941) but the /have hardly done more than keep pace with ^{those in the} higher industrial wage levels. On the whole, the economic status of farm workers has changed little for the better, if at all. Tradition in agriculture has rooted the rights of producers in land tenure. But farm workers have no tenure. On the other hand, neither laws nor the customs of hire give them the protection at work or other advantages enjoyed by most industrial laborers. Not even the legal right of farm laborers to bargain collectively for the terms and conditions of their employment has been affirmed for farm laborers as it has been for industrial workers.

Practically none of the protective social and labor legislation has benefited the farm worker with the exception of the Sugar Acts of 1934 and 1937. There is no legislative control over wages or hours of work in agriculture. There is little public regulation over the employment of women and children in this industry.

Hiring methods have been haphazard; that is to say, the methods which sufficed for the hiring of the traditional hired hand, based on slow turn-over and the recruitment of men from within relatively small communities where everyone knew everyone else, have been carried over into the hiring of seasonal labor on a large scale. The results have not been good. The failure of hiring methods to work properly is at the root of much of the labor supply difficulty. The failure is clearly visible now that farm labor supply is reduced, but it existed formerly too, except that then the burden of maladjustment fell on the worker. In the 1930's bad distribution of labor supply in farming meant further aggravation of unemployment. Today it can mean shortage of farm labor in some areas while in other areas surpluses of labor may still remain.

Low earnings, intermittent employment and general lack of security affect all aspects of the lives of farm workers, and are of concern to the rural population as a whole.

From the viewpoint of the Nation, the disadvantages of the lowered status of farm workers can be measured in a number of ways.

The most pressing and immediate disadvantage has already been noted; that is, the increasing danger of farm labor shortage. But there are other disadvantages which go deeper and which are of at least equal importance in the war emergency. Added up, the various handicaps of farm labor create a kind of status which can be called second-class citizenship. Effects of second-class citizenship, like those of slavery, cannot be confined to a single group. Perpetuation of low levels of economic and social status and insecurity for one group creates forces which pull other groups down to the same levels.

Finally there is the difficulty of enlisting disadvantaged citizens in the war effort. Axis nations must force unwilling populations along with them, whereas in a democracy every individual has a stake in victory. The bargaining position of the individual farm workers has improved in the last 2 years, but little has been accomplished to put them as a class on an equal footing with other American workers. Such equality is vital for their full participation in the war effort.

Financial or other material assistance to farm wage workers will not be sufficient to raise their morale to the level necessary for maximum production. It is true that in many respects it is easy to measure contributions to security in money terms, but farm workers need more than food or clothing or the many things which money can buy, important as these may be. Starving armies have won great victories. The Chinese soldiers who have fought off the Japanese war machine since 1937 are, by and large, at least as badly off economically as the most underpaid farm wage workers in America. But they fought because they had something to fight for. Unquestionably the same is true of the disadvantaged groups in our population. Equality in status and opportunity is probably the single most important factor at the root of the morale problem.

II. FACTORS BEHIND FARM LABOR PROBLEMS

In order to receive immediate attention, farm labor problems must be investigated in their isolated aspects. However, from a long-range point of view, in order to arrive at a reasonably permanent solution, they must also be studied as parts of the economic and social structure of agriculture as a whole. While some analysts of farm labor problems may have identified too closely farm-worker interests with farmer-employer interests, it is nevertheless undeniable that considerable unity of interest does exist. Rising farm prices and income, for example, at least make possible increased farm-worker earnings. The interrelationship may extend even beyond the framework of the agricultural economy. Improvement of farm income usually accompanies general upward movement of business activity associated with expanding industrial employment. Such an expansion frequently attracts farm and rural workers and results in draining off surplus labor from agriculture with consequent beneficial results for those who remain because their bargaining position in the farm labor market is strengthened.

Detailed analysis of the forces which lie behind all questions in the field of farm labor has not been undertaken in the review which follows.

Only some of the more important factors which underlie farm labor problems are discussed.

A. TECHNOLOGY

The effect on farming methods, farm size, and farm ownership of recent technological advance has varied from area to area. The initial effect of the introduction of new machines and methods often has been a modification of farming patterns already customary in the locality, not the imposition of a new, uniform type of farming for the area. In Iowa, for example, family farms, often operated with the aid of a year-round hired man, were common. Here the initial result of mechanization in many cases has been a marked increase in the acreages per farm operated as "family-size" farms. In other areas, increased corporate ownership and operation have attended mechanization of farming.

By cutting down the time required for a crop operation, mechanization decreases the labor requirement per unit of product and increases the area of operation per man per unit of time. For a given volume of product the first of these effects displaces farm workers from agriculture. By increasing the size of farm which a family can operate the second effect may reduce the number of farms operated. Mechanization does increase the size of farms, often eliminating some family farmers as well as croppers and laborers in the process, but it does not necessarily displace the family farm as such. Thus, many former tenant operators and owners, seeking wage employment, have explained their loss of a landhold with the phrase, "tractored out," even though family farms have not been eliminated in the area from which they came.

This phase of the result of mechanization occurs in scattered areas. The introduction of tractors in Texas, for example, has led in many cotton districts, to consolidation of tenant farms into large holdings, worked by wage labor. Cases are reported in which from three to as many as nine families were displaced by one tractor. The elimination of 20,000 farm units in Texas between January 1, 1937, and January 1, 1938 (not a net decline of farms in the State), has been attributed largely to consolidation of units accompanying a change to tractor cultivation. To this may be partly due the fact that 130,000 agricultural workers in the State were unemployed, as revealed by the 1937 Census of Unemployment.

Output per farm worker increased about 40 percent between 1909 and 1939. Despite slowly expanding markets during the early part of that period, total employment in agriculture did not increase; in fact it probably declined somewhat during the period.

In times when there is little work in nonagricultural occupations, mechanization, by displacing both individual laborers and independent farm families, leads to farm labor surpluses, poorer jobs, and lower farm wages, thereby giving the operators of larger than family farms a competitive advantage over operators of efficient family farms.

In crops where mechanized equipment is available at all stages of land preparation, cultivation, and harvest, labor requirements tend to smooth out. Kansas wheat farming where the harvesting is more than 90 percent by combine is an excellent example. On the other hand, incomplete mechanization of crop operations, such as the mechanized cultivating, but hand-harvesting of onions, greatly accentuates the seasonal labor peaks of nonmechanized operations. In creating this larger seasonal demand, incomplete mechanization makes the farm labor situation more acute for both the farm operator and the farm laborer under conditions of either full employment or underemployment. In periods of underemployment the earnings of seasonal labor are reduced and, while the farm operator may have a cheaper and more abundant supply of seasonal workers, he still has problems of recruiting labor in the right amount and at the right time.

Although full employment will enable seasonal workers to get better pay and working conditions, the mobile character of their occupation prevents a satisfactory life. Moreover, by offering alternative jobs, full employment may so cut the farm labor supply as to render extremely precarious the operation of larger than family farms devoted to incompletely mechanized crops, especially those of a specialized character.

The combination of incomplete mechanization with recent developments in the refrigeration, transportation, and marketing of fruit and vegetable crops, accentuates still more the demand for seasonal labor, and the disadvantages inherent in this type of labor for both the laborer and the farmer.

B. LOST MARKETS

The swift progress of mechanization during the last decade, with its consequent displacement of farm workers, has coincided with losses of domestic and foreign markets, which also result in displacement of labor.

A consequence of growing nationalism in Europe was a drive on the part of many nations to become self-sufficient. Bounties to agriculture within nationalistic countries and erection of tariff barriers against imports have resulted in loss of markets to American farmers. Tariffs on industrial imports, set up by this country, hampered exports of farm products by destroying trade reciprocity, and collaterally encouraged the opening or diversion of lands on other continents to crops formerly supplied by the United States. The effect of lost markets on farm workers is now being cushioned to some extent by war employment and has been alleviated by the various government programs of relief and rehabilitation. But the loss of employment opportunities accompanying lost markets was serious and both unemployment and underemployment of farm people still are grave problems in many farm areas.

Moreover, programs designed to cushion the effects of market loss may have stimulated displacement from the land. Crop adjustment programs, for example, may have furnished part of the cash income necessary to purchase tractors and other machines -- just as high farm prices operated to speed mechanization during the first World War. Also the adjustment program has conformed to the common law and usage in making payments on a basis of landholds, a practice which in some cases may have placed a heavy strain on local committees to prevent landlords from divorcing tenants from their land and operating with wage labor, with or without mechanization. It should be recognized, on the other hand, that without the adjustment program, bankruptcy and displacement among farmers would have been much more widespread, and distress among refugee farm populations probably would have reached catastrophic proportions.

C. TRENDS IN FARM POPULATION

The loss of farm employment opportunities due to technological and other changes in the 1930's was accompanied by an increase in that part of the farm population which falls in the productive age groups.

The excess of births over deaths in rural areas has always been high. And after the disappearance of new opportunities on the geographic frontier, population pressure on the land increased. The draining of youths from farm areas to serve the swiftly expanding commercial and industrial world eased the pressure of farm peoples on dwindling farm opportunity from the turn of the century until the depression beginning in 1929. But during the 1930's, with millions unemployed in the cities, opportunities for urban employments were inadequate to relieve the pressure of population in farm areas.

Nearly 400,000 farm males are reaching maturity and only about 110,000 farmers are dying each year. Possibly 110,000 more during the decade of the 30's retired or left for other occupations. This constitutes a net annual addition to the "surplus" of males of productive age on farms. Estimates of the number of men who could be spared from farm work without loss of production for the market, together with the totally unemployed men on farms, totaled 3,000,000 or more at the beginning of 1940.

Proper utilization of the rural population which was formerly considered "surplus", and which is now badly needed, is one of the key problems in the war effort.

D. THE AGRICULTURAL LADDER

The early American ideal was that every farm youth should rise, by successive steps of economic advancement, up the agricultural ladder, from an unpaid laborer on the home farm to the status of a

paid laborer, thence to that of cropper or tenant, and eventually to that of owner. At first this process was not difficult because of the presence of free land in the public domain. But as the country developed economically and free land disappeared, the movement upward on the "ladder" appeared to be increasingly difficult so that today we have a large proportion of the farm population working as tenants and laborers. This, of course, raises the question whether farm laborers should reconcile themselves to remaining without land tenure in agriculture -- members of a permanent laboring class -- or whether the obstacles to movement up the ladder should be removed.

It was long customary to regard the farm laborer not as an ordinary hired worker but as a farmer's apprentice. Often he was a neighbor's son or a thrifty hard-working immigrant. Farmers complained that as soon as he became really useful he left for a farm of his own. But in many areas by the 1930's the hired man who ate at the farmer's table was rapidly being replaced by resident or migrant seasonal workers.

A study of tenancy statistics, however, offers warning against overemphasis upon movement up the agricultural ladder as having been characteristic of American agriculture in the past. At no time have all American farmers, or even a preponderant number of them, climbed the traditional ladder. In fact, of those who have attained farm ownership, only a small percentage have done so by taking successive steps one after the other up the ladder. Even in 1919, W. J. Spillman ^{1/} found that only 20 percent of the 2,112 midwestern farmers included in a study made by him took the four steps in the order: unpaid family labor, hired man, tenant, and owner -- while 34 percent of the owners had never been on the hired man or tenant rungs but had passed immediately into ownership at the time of leaving the home farm.

The Report of the President's Committee on Farm Tenancy ^{2/} stated that "Two significant generalizations may be drawn from a study regarding the age of tenants and owners. First, decade by decade, it is becoming increasingly difficult for farmers to climb the so-called agricultural ladder onto the ownership rung. Second, there is developing a permanent tenant class from which relatively few emerge into ownership." In other words, there appears to have been a slowing of the movement up the agricultural ladder.

^{1/} "The Agricultural Ladder," American Economic Review, Volume IX, Supplements.

^{2/} 75th Congress, First Session, House Document 149, Farm Tenancy, Report of the President's Committee on Farm Tenancy, 1937, p. 54.

The same report also pointed out that "in recent years movement (on the agricultural ladder) from rung to rung has been predominantly in the direction of descent rather than ascent. (There is) an increasing tendency for the rungs of the ladder to become bars -- forcing imprisonment in a fixed social status from which it is increasingly difficult to escape." ^{3/} From 1926 to 1937 approximately one-third of all Americans who owned farms slipped down or off the "agricultural ladder." In one year, 1933, over 5 percent of farm owners lost status. In certain areas, for example, the Mountain and West North Central divisions, almost one-half of the owners of farm lands dropped down the ladder. Under these circumstances it appears that the agricultural laborers do not represent a group of tenants in the making but rather that tenants are to be regarded as potential wage workers.

E. INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT AND FARM INCOME

Aside from long-run factors already referred to, such as increase in farm population, decrease in demand for labor because of mechanization, and influences affecting adversely the opportunity to rise on the agricultural ladder, the factors which seem to affect most directly the welfare of the agricultural laborer are, first, changes in the volume of industrial employment, and second, fluctuations in farm income.

The tendency for the farm labor supply to move inversely in relation to changes in factory employment is particularly noticeable in such States as New York and Illinois. In Ohio, little relationship between movements in the supply of farm labor and factory employment was discernable prior to 1928; since that date, however, the correspondence in movements has ^{been} very close. In Iowa, which is not so highly industrialized as the States already mentioned, there appears to be little relationship between these two factors. In Georgia, as in the South generally, and in California and Washington, a similarity of trends in the supply of farm labor and in factory unemployment during the period from 1932 to date is evident. Thus, there is apparently good ground for believing that changes in the supply of farm labor are most immediately and directly influenced by fluctuations in nonagricultural employment.

^{3/} 75th Congress, First Session, House Document 149, Farm Tenancy, Report of the President's Committee on Farm Tenancy, 1937, p. 5.

It is clear that many factors, such as the volume of farm production, crop acreages, and mechanization contribute to changes in the demand for farm labor. Another influence governing the demand for farm labor is the farmer's ability to pay wages. Farm wage rates are, therefore, a function of many variable factors, including the ability of farm operators to hire, the competition between industry and agriculture for labor, the available supply of farm laborers, and the bargaining position of agricultural workers.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

A large number of proposals have been advanced to improve the status and living and working conditions of farm labor. These proposals have been set forth at different times by various people to meet different aspects of the problem. In some part, their feasibility is a matter for legislative decision. But feasible reforms in behalf of farm labor which do not require legislative enactment are numerous. A few of the most important are set forth below. It will be seen that some are of immediate applicability while others must be considered in terms of long-range planning. They are set forth to indicate possible directions of endeavor in the field of farm labor reform.

A. REGULATION OF WAGES

1. It has been recommended that the system of wage regulation now in effect in the growing of sugar beets or cane under the Sugar Act of 1937 be applied to all crops for which any kind of benefit, payment, or loan of any description is extended by the Federal Government.
2. Voluntary Wage Boards - It has also been proposed that recommendations as to farm wage rates be made by voluntary wage boards. Such recommendations would not be binding except insofar as they received the support of public opinion. The wage boards themselves might be public bodies similar to those set up in recent years by the Governor of California for cotton picking and chopping, or, following the pattern of English wage boards, they might consist of representatives of labor and of farmer-employers, as well as of the Government, or public at large.
3. State Minimum Wage Laws (See p. 163).
4. Wage Payment and Wage Collection Laws (See p. 170).

B. STABILIZATION OF FARM EMPLOYMENT

Various proposals have been offered to decasualize the employment of farm wage workers:

1. More efficient recruiting and placement of farm workers within an area of production through the strengthening and extension of the Farm Placement Service of the U. S. Employment Service.
2. State and Federal regulation of recruiting and transportation of farm workers by private individuals, contractors, and employment agencies.
3. Extension of the Farm Security Administration camp program to provide a physical base for improvement of the farm labor market.
4. Encouragement of the cooperative use of labor pools by local farm operators both on a seasonal and year-round basis.

C. LEGAL PROTECTION OF ECONOMIC, CIVIL, AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

1. Extension of State and Federal Social Security legislation to farm workers.
2. Inclusion of farm labor under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1937 and under similar State laws.
3. Coverage of farm workers by the National Labor Relations Act and by similar State laws.
4. Elimination of poll taxes and other voting restrictions.
5. Repeal or invalidation of State laws and regulations which promote or encourage the practice of forced labor in agriculture.
6. Extension of safety regulations and State Workmen's Compensation laws to farm laborers.
7. Prohibition or regulation under State Child Labor laws of employment of children on farms operated by persons other than the parents or guardians of the children employed.

D. PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

1. Development of large scale public works programs for rural areas to balance public works programs in urban areas.
2. Expansion of the Food and Cotton Stamp plan and surplus commodity distribution.

3. Uniform drafting of relief standards based on minimum standards of subsistence independent of prevailing wage rates, if necessary.
4. Regulation of public assistance in such manner as to interfere as little as possible with the movement of farm workers between the relief rolls and the labor market.
5. Establishment of uniform settlement laws requiring a reasonably short length of residence to establish settlement.
6. Extension of uniform Federal direct relief where adequate relief is not available in local areas.

E. SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

1. Expansion of housing programs for farm workers particularly in the form of camps and labor homes.
2. State regulation of private housing, especially housing maintained by employers for farm workers.
3. Securing of tenure on the land for selected agricultural workers through programs similar to the tenant purchase program under the Bankhead-Jones Act and through cooperative farming.
4. Expansion of medical and health facilities for farm workers through agricultural workers' health and medical associations, a number of which have already been set up in several States.

F. EXPANSION OF INDUSTRIAL OPPORTUNITIES IN POST-WAR PLANNING

1. Agricultural representation on industrial planning boards.
2. Recognition in national planning of the long-time continuing problems created by constant movement between rural and urban areas as a result of differences in population growth and economic opportunities.
3. Development of long-time projects on a public-works basis directed toward better conservation practices, improvement of rural housing, and the like.
4. Assumption by agriculture of responsibility for its technological casualties.

In the present war situation the following proposals seem worthy of immediate consideration:

1. Regulation of wages in agriculture.
2. Rationalization of employment and strengthening and expansion of the Farm Placement Service of the United States Employment Service.
3. Extension of the migratory labor camp program of the Farm Security Administration to assist in meeting farm labor supply problems.
4. Extension of social security legislation to farm labor.

PART TWO

I. A DESCRIPTION OF FARM LABOR

A. THE NUMBER AND DISTRIBUTION OF FARM LABORERS

Labor power expended on farms is drawn from several sources which include the farm operator, members of his family, members of neighbor families and hired outsiders. On a majority of farms in the United States the labor of the farm family, including that of the operator, suffices. ^{4/}

During 1939, 63 percent of the farms of the United States hired no labor for cash wages according to early reports from the 1940 Census of Agriculture. The 1930 census showed that 58 percent of the farms had hired no labor in 1929.

On April 1, 1940 there were 5,204,161 farms (85.4 percent) out of a total of 6,096,799 which had hired no labor for 2 days or more in the previous week. In January 1935, 85.8 percent of the farms were in this class. These months, of course, are not representative of the year as a whole. However, the figures indicate the extent to which farmers are dependent upon unpaid family labor for many farming operations.

During the week of March 24 to 30, 1940, of the entire working force on the farms of the United States, 35 percent were owner-operators or managers and 22 percent were tenant-operators including croppers. Croppers, considered by themselves, made up 5 percent of the farm labor at that time. Unpaid farm family workers made up 27 percent of the total workers on farms as compared with 16 percent for hired laborers.

1. Trends in Employment

Changes in the volume of total farm employment are difficult to define. ^{5/} From the census data (Table 1), it appears that the total number of persons engaged in agriculture on April 1, 1930, was somewhat greater than on June 1, 1900, and considerably less than the number thus engaged on April 15, 1910.

^{4/} The following definitions of terms used should be noted: "Total farm employment": - farm operators plus unpaid farm family members who work on the farm plus hired farm laborers. "Farm laborers": - unpaid farm-family members who work on the farm (other than the farm operator) plus hired farm laborers. "Unpaid family laborers": - members of the farm family, other than the farm operator, who work on the farm, part-time or full time, without wages.

^{5/} The difficulties lie in interpreting the Census data. The first of these relates to the dates when the censuses were taken, in 1900 on June 1, in 1910 on April 15, in 1920 on

Table 1. - Farm laborers and expenditures for farm wages in the United States
1900-1940 1/

Item	Census year and date				
	1900, June 1	1910, Apr. 15	1920, Jan. 1	1930, Apr. 1	1940, Mar. 23-30 <u>2/</u>
Number of farms.....	5,737,372	6,361,502	6,448,343	6,288,648	6,096,799
Gainful workers in agriculture.....	10,248,935	12,388,430	10,665,812	10,482,323	9,162,547 <u>3/</u>
Percentage as farm laborers	43.6	50.1	39.2	41.7	40.6
Farm Laborers - total <u>2/</u>	4,469,446	6,205,434	4,186,130	4,372,258	3,721,977 <u>5/</u>
Average per farm <u>4/</u>	0.78	0.97	0.65	0.70	0.61
Wage workers - total <u>2/</u>	2,103,297	2,894,900	2,336,009	2,727,035	2,358,454 <u>5/</u>
Average per farm <u>4/</u>	0.37	0.45	0.36	0.43	0.39
Unpaid family workers - total <u>2/</u>	2,366,149	3,310,534	1,850,121	1,645,223	1,363,523 <u>5/</u>
Average per farm <u>4/</u>	0.41	0.52	0.29	0.26	0.22
Percentage of farms hiring labor <u>6/</u>	---	45.9	44.8	41.8	37.1 <u>1/</u>
Cash expenditure for farm labor <u>6/</u>	\$357,391,930 <u>g/</u>	\$521,729,941	\$1,098,712,517	\$955,420,313	\$781,791,558
Average per farm <u>4/</u> , <u>6/</u>	\$62 <u>g/</u>	\$82	\$170	\$152	\$128
Average per farm hiring <u>4/</u> , <u>6/</u> ...	---	\$179	\$380	\$363	\$346

1/ Omitted data not available.

2/ Occupational data from 1900-1930 are of principal occupations reported without regard to actual employment at the date of the Census. Similar data for 1940, were obtainable only by estimates from data taken on different bases; the Bureau of the Census estimate for such a total of gainful workers in agriculture was 9,162,547, as given.

3/ Estimate released by the Bureau of the Census, March 28, 1942. See preceding footnote.

4/ All farms.

5/ Data for numbers of persons were compiled and estimated from various census reports and confidential preliminary information.

6/ Within the year preceding that of the Census.

1/ In the week of March 23-30, 1940, 14.6 percent of farms hired labor the equivalent of 2 or more days.

g/ Including value of board furnished. Separate data for cash wages are not available.

After careful interpretation of these figures the authors of "Trends in Employment in Agriculture," arrived at the conclusion that between 1909 and 1936 average total agricultural employment declined 10 percent, or from 12,209,000 to 10,997,000. The bulk of the decline took place in the three years prior to 1920 and was brought about by the wartime demand for labor in other industries. From 1919 to 1926 total agricultural employment increased about 4 percent. Between 1926 and 1934 it declined about 6 percent or 700,000. 6/

These changes for the country as a whole are reflected in diverse ways in the several crop production areas. Total agricultural employment declined more rapidly from 1909 to 1936 in the Eastern Dairy, Eastern Cotton and Corn areas, than in the United States as a whole. In the Range and Northwestern areas, on the other hand, throughout the period, total agricultural employment increased, due to the rapid growth of crop acreage. In other areas, such as the Delta and Western Dairy areas, between 1909 and 1936 there was little change. 7/

Farm laborers, (family members and hired workers, as distinguished from farm operators), numbered 4,372,258 according to the Census on April 1, 1930. This was slightly below the 1900 figure, almost 2 million less than that of April 15, 1910, but somewhat above the January 1920 figure.

It is generally agreed, however, that the figure for 1910 is misleading. On the basis of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics 8/ figures, which are adjusted averages for the year, the number of farm laborers dropped from 5,998,000 in 1910, when they formed 49 percent of the total farm labor force, to 5,131,000 in 1920; there was a further decrease in 1930 (to 4,943,000), and in 1935 (to 4,607,000). In the last-named year they formed 41 percent of the total farm employment. But the difficulties in interpreting the Census data are such that it is by no means certain that in 1930 there were fewer hired and unpaid family laborers than in 1910 or that this group made up a smaller proportion of the entire farm labor force.

5/ (cont'd) January 1, in 1930 on April 1, and in 1935 in January. It is obvious that a count of farm laborers in January, when agricultural hiring is at the lowest point of the year, cannot be compared directly with the count secured in April, when employment has greatly increased. Moreover, neither the January nor the April figure tells much about the number of laborers at the peak of the season in June, July or August. A second difficulty arises from the fact that the methods of census enumeration differ, even when, as in 1910 and 1930, the census month was the same. Finally, there is the difficulty of securing proper answers to questions relating to farm labor.

6/ Shaw, Eldon E., and Hopkins, John A., Trends in Employment in Agriculture, 1909-36, Works Progress Administration, National Research Project, Report A-8, Philadelphia, Pa. Nov. 1938. Page 11.

7/ Ibid. p. 79.

8/ U. S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

Professor John D. Black, in one attack upon the problem, ignores the figures for the Nation as a whole, and, after examining varying tendencies in different States, says that:

"A reasonable conclusion from this analysis of the farm tenure structure (on block) is that piling up at the foot of the tenure ladder,—increase in the proportion of farm workers not ready or able to become tenants,—has probably been as significant a development as increase in the proportion at the tenancy level. This is not surprising, but it is not generally realized. It is mainly a phenomenon associated with the general intensification of our agriculture, as cultivated row crops have increasingly taken the place of sown crops, livestock farming, grain farming, dairy and poultry farming of hog and beef-cattle farming, and fruit and truck crops of field crops. Increasing use of power machinery has offset this trend in many sections since 1910, and may do so increasingly henceforth. But in other sections the need for hand labor will be dominant. In the South the cropper system has for the most part kept down the fraction technically reported as laborers by the Census; but the proportion of tenants has increased more than enough to compensate for this." 2/

This "damming up" of farm laborers on farms undoubtedly means that hired farm work is becoming a permanent, rather than a transitional, occupation for an increasing number of farm people. Among these hired farm workers are proportionately fewer tramps, hoboes, "bindlestiffs," and drifters—who figured so largely in accounts of farm labor two decades ago. On the other hand there are proportionately more of those who may be regarded as normal farm people, many of them young persons.

Part of the difficulty appears to lie in the lessened likelihood of farm laborers rising up the "agricultural ladder" to farm tenancy and ownership. Moreover, in the past, opportunities for employment in industry have been lacking.

The next question is whether hired farm laborers, as compared with unpaid family laborers, form an increasing, decreasing, or stationary proportion of the total farm labor force. This question, also, is extremely difficult to answer. Only since 1910 has the Census differentiated between hired and unpaid family laborers. In 1910 hired laborers and family laborers appear to have formed nearly equal proportions (23 and 26 percent, respectively) of the total working labor force on the farms of

2/ Black, John D., and Allen, R. H., The Growth of Farm Tenancy in the United States, Quarterly Journal of Economics, May 1937, page 406-7.

the country. Between 1910 and 1920 the proportion of family laborers among the total farm workers diminished to about 20 percent and remained at that level until 1935. The hired laborers, on the other hand, increased to 25 percent in 1920 and 26 percent in 1930, but under the influence of the depression dropped to 22 percent in 1935.^{10/} The proportion of family workers is especially high in the Southern States. (See Table 2)

In 1930 hired workers formed a particularly large proportion of the total farm labor force in California (56.4 percent), Nevada (52.9 percent), Arizona (53.0 percent), Florida (46.6 percent), Maryland (44.9 percent), New Jersey (53.3 percent), Massachusetts (54.2 percent), Rhode Island (59.6 percent), and Connecticut (53.0 percent) ^{11/} (See also Table 2.)

According to estimates of trends of employment made from data of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, the annual average numbers of hired workers employed on farms on the first of each month have declined from 2,868,000 in 1909 to 2,566,000 in 1940 and to 2,532,000 in 1941. But this decline did not occur uniformly throughout the period. Between 1909 and 1916 employment of hired laborers increased, and after a setback ending with 1919, rose to its peak in 1926, and remained at a high level until 1929. Between 1929 and 1934 the annual average numbers of hired workers employed on the first of each month decreased 21 percent, after which there was a slight recovery until 1937 when a decline again occurred. ^{12/} (See Table 3).

^{10/} Shaw and Hopkins, Op. Cit.

^{11/} Fifteenth Census of the U. S. 1930, Population, Vol. IV, Occupations by States.

^{12/} Census data on wages paid to farm laborers ought to offer some check on the comparative number of hired farm laborers in the various census years. On this point see "Research in Farm Labor," John D. Black, editor: Social Science Research Council, Bulletin No. 16, page 1: "If we may assume that the enumerators were equally negligent in collecting data upon wages in all four of these census years, these data indicate more labor hired for wages in 1930 than in the two preceding Census years, and perhaps as much as in 1900. In view of the fact that the 1900 Census was more complete than that of 1910, and probably than any census since, we may be safe in saying that more labor was paid wages in 1930 than in any preceding census years--certainly more per farm hiring labor. This is contrary to popular impressions, but seems to be supported by other evidence.

"However, some important qualifying statements are needed. As the years have gone by, probably more farmers' sons have received wages for work done at home. The decline in size of farm families should also have reduced the amount of unpaid family labor available; likewise the increase in time spent in school."

Table 2.- Persons gainfully occupied in Agriculture, April 1, 1930¹

State and geographic divisions	CLASSES OF WORKERS										
	Number					Percentage of total					
	Owners and tenants	Managers and foremen	Laborers		Other occupa- tions	Total	Owners and tenants	Managers and foremen	Laborers		Other occupa- tions
			Wage	Unpaid family					Wage	Unpaid family	
Maine	31,163	478	16,776	3,005	97	51,519	60.5	0.9	32.6	5.8	0.2
New Hampshire	12,019	406	8,941	674	51	22,091	54.5	1.8	40.5	3.0	0.2
Vermont	20,742	390	14,781	2,179	49	38,141	54.4	1.0	38.8	5.7	0.1
Massachusetts	21,125	1,487	30,347	2,472	584	56,015	37.7	2.7	54.2	4.4	1.0
Rhode Island	3,001	172	5,292	314	94	8,873	33.8	1.9	59.6	3.6	1.1
Connecticut	14,759	786	19,458	1,381	303	36,687	40.3	2.1	53.0	3.8	0.8
<i>New England</i>	<i>102,809</i>	<i>3,719</i>	<i>95,595</i>	<i>10,025</i>	<i>1,178</i>	<i>213,326</i>	<i>48.2</i>	<i>1.7</i>	<i>44.8</i>	<i>4.7</i>	<i>0.6</i>
New York	148,144	3,052	103,893	11,997	893	267,979	55.3	1.1	38.8	4.5	0.3
New Jersey	25,649	1,187	34,320	2,720	595	64,471	39.8	1.8	53.3	4.2	0.9
Pennsylvania	145,795	2,660	84,264	18,004	720	251,443	57.9	1.1	33.5	7.2	0.3
<i>Middle Atlantic</i>	<i>319,588</i>	<i>6,899</i>	<i>222,477</i>	<i>32,721</i>	<i>2,208</i>	<i>583,893</i>	<i>54.7</i>	<i>1.2</i>	<i>38.1</i>	<i>5.6</i>	<i>0.4</i>
Ohio	200,775	2,449	89,714	18,247	1,033	312,218	64.3	0.8	28.8	5.8	0.3
Indiana	166,429	1,726	65,652	15,967	376	250,150	66.5	0.7	26.2	6.4	0.2
Illinois	208,435	2,737	113,234	27,345	773	352,524	59.1	0.8	32.1	7.8	0.2
Michigan	158,819	1,750	64,117	22,792	485	247,963	64.1	0.7	25.8	9.2	0.2
Wisconsin	177,287	1,751	78,420	32,417	259	290,134	61.1	0.6	27.0	11.2	0.1
<i>East North Central</i>	<i>911,745</i>	<i>10,413</i>	<i>411,137</i>	<i>116,768</i>	<i>2,926</i>	<i>1,452,989</i>	<i>62.8</i>	<i>0.7</i>	<i>28.3</i>	<i>8.0</i>	<i>0.2</i>
Minnesota	183,645	1,518	77,236	41,004	419	303,822	60.5	0.5	25.4	13.5	0.1
Iowa	211,917	2,024	89,048	27,745	418	331,152	64.0	0.6	26.9	8.4	0.1
Missouri	246,581	2,096	82,435	39,660	479	371,251	66.4	0.6	22.2	10.7	0.1
North Dakota	78,653	846	38,888	15,955	109	134,451	58.5	0.6	28.9	11.9	0.1
South Dakota	84,237	574	32,561	13,351	63	130,786	64.5	0.4	24.9	10.2	(2)
Nebraska	129,958	1,089	47,070	19,023	202	197,342	65.8	0.6	23.9	9.6	0.1
Kansas	162,847	1,121	46,702	18,663	211	229,544	70.9	0.5	20.4	8.1	0.1
<i>West North Central</i>	<i>1,097,838</i>	<i>9,268</i>	<i>413,940</i>	<i>175,401</i>	<i>1,901</i>	<i>1,698,348</i>	<i>64.7</i>	<i>0.5</i>	<i>24.4</i>	<i>10.3</i>	<i>0.1</i>
Delaware	9,141	177	6,693	1,295	35	17,341	52.7	1.0	38.6	7.5	0.2
Maryland	38,632	1,135	37,830	6,447	182	84,226	45.9	1.3	44.9	7.7	0.2
District of Columbia	258	24	780	11	26	1,099	23.5	2.2	71.0	1.0	2.3
Virginia	150,450	2,299	81,938	35,888	261	270,836	55.6	0.8	30.3	13.2	0.1
West Virginia	69,724	663	29,886	17,838	51	118,162	59.0	0.6	25.3	15.1	(2)
North Carolina	270,187	2,027	93,874	133,687	148	499,923	54.1	0.4	18.8	26.7	(2)
South Carolina	152,224	1,427	82,286	108,598	106	344,641	44.2	0.4	23.9	31.5	(2)
Georgia	249,991	2,665	114,788	130,037	235	497,716	50.3	0.5	23.1	26.1	(2)
Florida	52,962	2,050	62,288	15,833	515	133,648	39.6	1.5	46.6	11.9	0.4
<i>South Atlantic</i>	<i>993,569</i>	<i>12,467</i>	<i>510,363</i>	<i>449,634</i>	<i>1,559</i>	<i>1,967,592</i>	<i>50.5</i>	<i>0.6</i>	<i>25.9</i>	<i>22.9</i>	<i>0.1</i>
Kentucky	234,776	1,429	69,078	53,143	149	358,575	65.5	0.4	19.3	14.8	(2)
Tennessee	234,627	1,283	68,784	71,784	145	376,623	62.3	0.3	18.4	19.0	(2)
Alabama	283,182	1,371	80,021	158,088	156	492,818	51.4	0.3	16.2	32.1	(2)
Mississippi	306,885	1,641	55,071	193,357	448	557,402	55.1	0.3	9.8	34.7	0.1
<i>East South Central</i>	<i>1,029,470</i>	<i>5,724</i>	<i>272,954</i>	<i>476,372</i>	<i>898</i>	<i>1,785,418</i>	<i>57.6</i>	<i>0.3</i>	<i>15.3</i>	<i>26.7</i>	<i>0.1</i>
Arkansas	240,108	1,476	59,516	83,194	318	384,612	62.4	0.4	15.5	21.6	0.1
Louisiana	159,260	1,912	72,057	63,414	595	297,239	53.7	0.6	24.2	21.3	0.2
Oklahoma	199,486	1,327	64,852	40,321	154	306,140	65.1	0.4	21.2	13.2	0.1
Texas	488,697	4,490	198,760	149,236	818	842,001	58.0	0.5	23.6	17.8	0.1
<i>West South Central</i>	<i>1,087,551</i>	<i>9,205</i>	<i>395,185</i>	<i>336,165</i>	<i>1,886</i>	<i>1,829,992</i>	<i>59.4</i>	<i>0.5</i>	<i>21.6</i>	<i>18.4</i>	<i>0.1</i>
Montana	47,490	820	25,416	5,726	226	79,678	59.6	1.0	31.9	7.2	0.3
Idaho	40,199	676	20,287	4,218	181	65,561	61.3	1.0	31.0	6.4	0.3
Wyoming	16,210	509	12,169	1,853	86	30,827	52.5	1.7	39.5	6.0	0.3
Colorado	58,352	1,029	38,170	8,383	300	106,234	54.9	1.0	35.9	7.9	0.3
New Mexico	30,438	606	22,018	5,799	110	58,971	51.6	1.0	37.3	9.9	0.2
Arizona	14,497	716	20,502	2,492	490	38,697	37.4	1.9	53.0	6.4	1.3
Utah	24,786	451	12,446	3,513	87	41,283	60.0	1.1	30.1	8.6	0.2
Nevada	3,528	278	4,735	347	60	8,948	39.4	3.1	52.9	3.9	0.7
<i>Mountain</i>	<i>235,500</i>	<i>5,085</i>	<i>155,743</i>	<i>32,331</i>	<i>1,540</i>	<i>430,199</i>	<i>54.7</i>	<i>1.2</i>	<i>36.2</i>	<i>7.5</i>	<i>0.4</i>
Washington	63,336	1,336	34,313	4,920	389	104,294	60.7	1.3	32.9	4.7	0.4
Oregon	49,917	1,013	26,650	4,174	277	82,031	60.9	1.2	32.5	5.1	0.3
California	126,399	8,871	188,678	6,712	3,581	334,241	37.8	2.7	56.4	2.0	1.1
<i>Pacific</i>	<i>239,652</i>	<i>11,220</i>	<i>249,641</i>	<i>15,806</i>	<i>4,247</i>	<i>520,566</i>	<i>46.0</i>	<i>2.2</i>	<i>48.0</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>0.8</i>
<i>United States</i>	<i>6,017,722</i>	<i>74,000</i>	<i>2,727,035</i>	<i>1,645,223</i>	<i>18,343</i>	<i>10,482,323</i>	<i>57.4</i>	<i>0.7</i>	<i>26.0</i>	<i>15.7</i>	<i>0.2</i>

¹Source: U. S. Census of Occupations, 1930. ²Less than one-tenth of one percent.

Table 3, - Agricultural employment in the United States, 1909-40 - Annual average of number of persons employed on first of each month

Year	: Total employment :		: Family workers 1/ :		: Hired workers :	
	: Average :	: Index :	: Average :	: Index :	: Average :	: Index :
	: number :	: (1924-29 :	: number :	: (1924-29 :	: number :	: (1924-29 :
	: (Thousands) :	: =100) :	: (Thousands) :	: =100) :	: (Thousands) :	: =100) :
1909	12,209	107	9,341	111	2,868	97
1910	12,146	107	9,269	110	2,877	98
1911	12,042	106	9,172	109	2,870	98
1912	12,038	106	9,149	109	2,889	98
1913	12,033	106	9,128	108	2,905	99
1914	12,000	106	9,081	108	2,919	99
1915	11,981	105	9,047	107	2,934	100
1916	12,016	106	9,050	107	2,966	101
1917	11,789	104	8,856	105	2,933	100
1918	11,248	100	8,507	101	2,841	97
1919	11,106	98	8,322	99	2,784	95
1920	11,362	100	8,479	101	2,883	98
1921	11,412	100	8,511	101	2,901	99
1922	11,443	101	8,528	101	2,915	99
1923	11,385	100	8,491	101	2,894	98
1924	11,362	100	8,488	101	2,874	98
1925	11,446	101	8,577	102	2,869	97
1926	11,534	102	8,507	101	3,027	103
1927	11,246	99	8,296	99	2,950	100
1928	11,295	99	8,340	99	2,956	100
1929	11,289	99	8,305	99	2,988	101
1930	11,173	98	8,323	99	2,850	97
1931	11,159	98	8,469	101	2,690	91
1932	11,069	97	8,571	102	2,498	85
1933	11,023	97	8,590	102	2,433	83
1934	10,852	96	8,506	101	2,346	80
1935	11,131	98	8,702	103	2,429	83
1936	11,047	97	8,486	101	2,561	87
1937	10,892	96	8,261	98	2,631	89
1938	10,796	95	8,176	97	2,620	89
1939	10,740	95	8,145	97	2,595	88
1940	10,585	93	8,019	95	2,566	87

Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

1/ Includes farm operators as well as unpaid members of the farm family who work on the farm.

Although the Bureau of the Census classifies sharecroppers as tenants, their economic and social status is in important respects more like that of hired laborers than that of tenants. ^{13/} Under the law in some Southern States, for instance, Arkansas, South Carolina and Georgia, the cropper is declared to be a wage laborer, paid for his labor by a share of the crop. ^{14/}

The total number of sharecroppers in 1930 was 776,278; in the Agricultural Census of 1935, the number fell to 716,256; and in 1940 declined still further to 541,291. In 1920 croppers constituted 5 percent of the total farm labor force; in 1930, 7 percent; in 1935, 6 percent; and in 1940, 6 percent. As further technological improvements are made, their numbers are likely to decline still further. Croppers are proportionately less numerous in Texas and Oklahoma than in the Delta and Eastern Cotton areas (table 4).

2. Geographic Distribution

The numerical distribution of hired farm laborers among the several geographic divisions, crop areas, and States is uneven (figure I). Heavy concentrations appear in several parts of California, in the Salt River district of Arizona, in the Rio Grande, Corpus Christi, and Black Prairie districts of Texas, in the sugar cane district of Louisiana, in the Mississippi and Arkansas Delta cotton areas, and in scattered fruit and truck crop districts in Florida and along the Atlantic Coast.

If sharecroppers had been included, the cotton-producing States would show a much heavier concentration of hired labor than appears in figure I.

As regards crop areas, wage laborers are especially numerous, compared with family laborers, in the Range area and the Eastern Dairy area (table 5). Hired workers are least important in the cotton and tobacco districts of the Middle East; in the three cotton areas, where sharecroppers are numerous; and in the small grain area. Certain fruit and specialty-crop States (e.g., California) have higher percentages of hired farm workers, compared with family workers, than any of the major farming areas as such (table 6).

It may be noted that the percentage of hired farm workers decreased from 1909 to 1936 in all areas except in the Western Dairy area where it remained little changed, and in the Eastern and Western cotton areas where it increased.

Although in the month of January 1935, 85.8 percent of the farms of the United States hired no workers, there was a relatively small number of farms on which workers were hired in large numbers (tables 7 and 8). At that time, 5,844,756 farms hired no laborers, and 967,594 each hired one or more. While 722,645 hired only one laborer, 11,410 (two-tenths of 1 percent) hired 10 or more laborers; their employees, 244,132 in number, made up 15 percent of the total hired farm laborers in the country. Farms which hired 10 or more laborers per farm were for the most part in the South Atlantic, West South Central, and Pacific States. It is on these farms that labor problems are most likely to arise, by contrast with the small or medium-sized farm, on which the hired man and a seasonal laborer

^{13/} See further discussion on page 45.

^{14/} Book, A. B., "A Note on the Legal Status of Share Tenants and Sharecroppers in the South", Law & Contemporary Problems, Oct. 1937 p. 545.

Table 4, - Sharecroppers in the United States, 1930 and 1940 ^{1/}

State and Region	:	: Percentage	:	: Percentage	:	Change	
	: 1930	: of total	: 1940	: of total	: 1930 - 40	: Number	: Percent
	: Number	: farm operators	: Number	: farm operators	: 1930 - 40	: Number	: Percent
Delaware	: 225	2.3	225	2.5	0	0	
Maryland	: 1,646	3.8	1,644	3.9	- 2	- 0.1	
Virginia	: 17,253	10.1	16,238	9.3	- 1,015	- 5.9	
West Virginia	: 1,834	2.2	1,123	1.1	- 711	- 38.8	
North Carolina	: 69,091	24.7	60,300	21.7	- 8,791	- 12.7	
South Carolina	: 48,939	31.0	33,474	24.3	-15,465	- 31.6	
Georgia	:100,854	39.4	60,934	28.2	-39,920	- 39.6	
Florida	: 4,816	8.2	3,407	5.4	- 1,409	- 29.3	
South Atlantic	:244,658	23.1	177,345	17.4	-67,313	- 27.5	
Kentucky	: 30,250	12.3	23,533	9.3	- 6,717	- 22.2	
Tennessee	: 50,304	20.5	41,490	16.8	- 8,814	- 17.5	
Alabama	: 65,134	25.3	41,370	17.9	-23,764	- 36.5	
Mississippi	:135,293	43.3	125,483	43.1	- 9,810	- 7.3	
East South Central	:230,981	26.5	231,876	22.7	-49,105	- 17.5	
Arkansas	: 75,034	31.0	47,666	22.0	-27,368	- 36.5	
Louisiana	: 49,428	30.6	39,631	26.4	- 9,797	- 19.8	
Oklahoma	: 21,055	10.3	4,952	2.8	-16,103	- 76.5	
Texas	:108,122	21.2	39,821	9.5	-65,301	- 62.1	
West South Central	:250,639	22.7	132,070	13.7	-118,569	- 47.3	
United States	:776,278	12.3	541,291	8.9	-234,987	- 30.3	

^{1/} Sixteenth Census of the U. S., 1940, Agriculture, U. S. Summary, Preliminary Release, U.S. - 2, March 18, 1941.

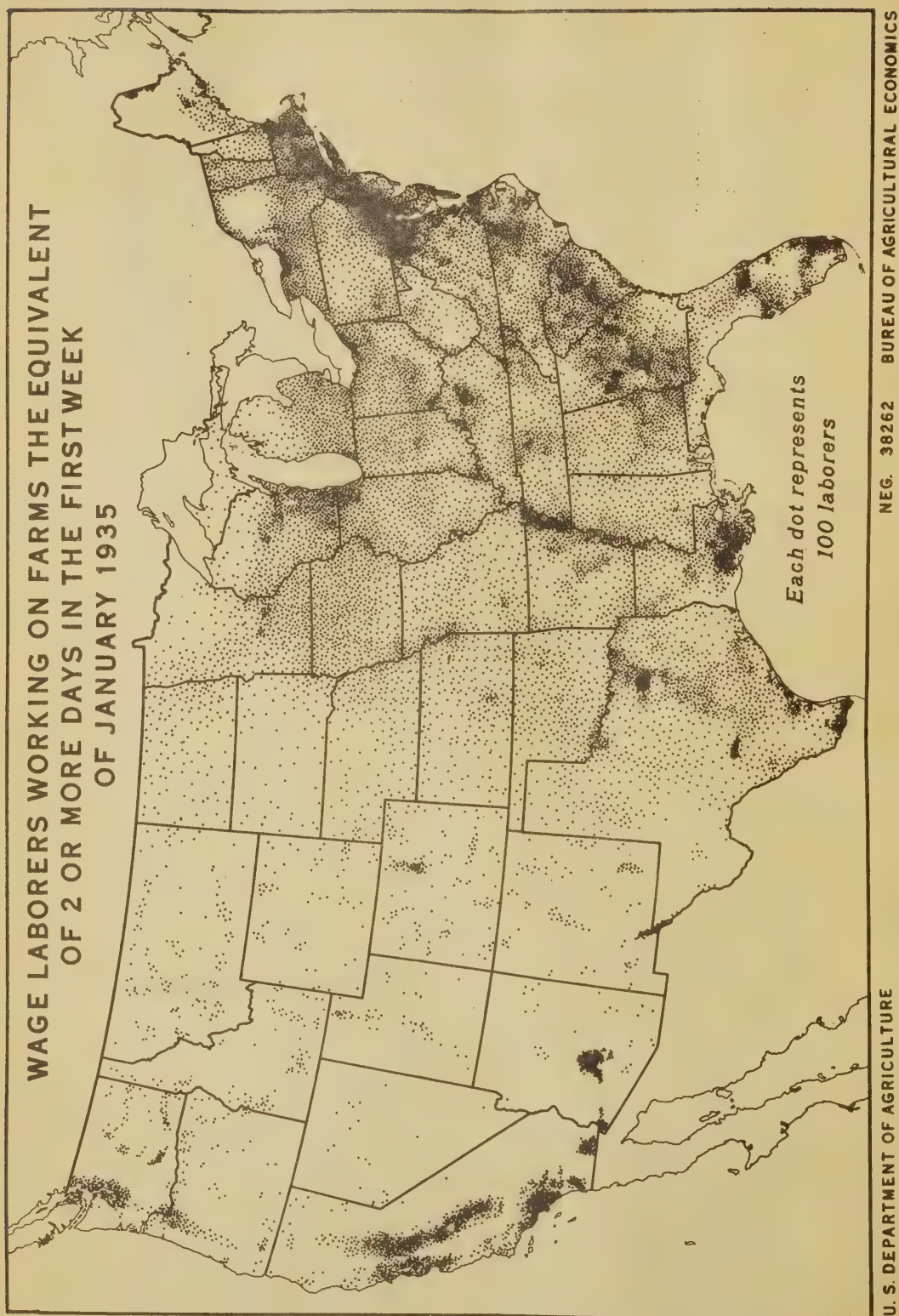


FIGURE 1

Table 5. - Estimated total farm labor force in principal farming areas 1/ of the United States in 1936. 2/

Area	Total (thousands)	<u>3/</u> Family workers		Hired workers		
		Number (thousands)	Percent- age of total in area	Number (thousands)	Percent- age of total in area	Percent- age of total hired in area
Total	11,047	8,486	77	2,561	23	100.0
Corn area	1,239	950	77	289	23	11.3
Eastern dairy area	738	500	68	238	32	9.3
Western dairy area	920	712	77	208	23	8.1
Middle eastern area	1,910	1,573	82	337	18	13.2
Eastern cotton area	1,391	1,083	78	308	22	12.0
Delta cotton area	1,340	1,090	81	250	19	9.8
Western cotton area	1,167	915	78	252	22	9.8
Small grain area	745	609	82	136	18	5.3
Range area	309	195	63	114	37	4.4
Northwestern area	297	211	71	86	29	3.4
Miscellaneous	991	648	65	343	35	13.4

1/ The States in the specified areas are as follows:

Corn area: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Ohio

Eastern dairy area: Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont

Western dairy area: Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin

Middle eastern area: Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia

Eastern cotton area: Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina

Delta Cotton area: Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi

Western cotton area: Oklahoma, Texas

Small grain area: Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota

Range area: Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming

Northwestern area: Idaho, Oregon, Washington

Miscellaneous: California, Missouri, Florida, Delaware, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Maine

2/ Unpublished data of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

3/ Includes the farm operator as well as the unpaid members of his family who work on the farm.

Table 6, - Hired farm workers as percentages of total agricultural workers, 1/ by area, 1909-36 2/

	: :United: Year	: :Corn: States	: :dairy: Corn	: :dairy: dairy	: :ern ern	: :Middle-: east-:	: :East-: ern	: :West-: Delta:	: :ern ern	: :Small: cotton:	: :North-: west-:
1909	: 23	: 26	: 35	: 23	: 20	: 18	: 19	: 19	: 23	: 40	: 33
1910	: 24	: 26	: 35	: 23	: 21	: 18	: 19	: 20	: 23	: 40	: 33
1911	: 24	: 26	: 35	: 23	: 20	: 18	: 19	: 20	: 23	: 40	: 33
1912	: 24	: 26	: 35	: 24	: 21	: 18	: 19	: 21	: 23	: 40	: 33
1913	: 24	: 26	: 35	: 24	: 21	: 18	: 19	: 21	: 23	: 40	: 33
1914	: 24	: 27	: 35	: 24	: 21	: 18	: 19	: 22	: 23	: 40	: 33
1915	: 24	: 27	: 35	: 24	: 21	: 18	: 19	: 22	: 23	: 41	: 32
1916	: 25	: 27	: 35	: 24	: 21	: 18	: 19	: 22	: 23	: 41	: 33
1917	: 25	: 27	: 35	: 25	: 21	: 18	: 19	: 23	: 23	: 41	: 32
1918	: 24	: 28	: 35	: 25	: 21	: 18	: 19	: 23	: 23	: 41	: 32
1919	: 25	: 28	: 35	: 25	: 21	: 18	: 19	: 23	: 23	: 41	: 32
1920	: 25	: 28	: 35	: 25	: 21	: 18	: 19	: 24	: 23	: 41	: 32
1921	: 25	: 28	: 35	: 26	: 21	: 19	: 19	: 24	: 24	: 41	: 32
1922	: 25	: 27	: 35	: 26	: 21	: 19	: 19	: 24	: 24	: 41	: 32
1923	: 25	: 27	: 35	: 27	: 21	: 19	: 18	: 24	: 24	: 40	: 31
1924	: 25	: 27	: 34	: 27	: 21	: 20	: 17	: 24	: 24	: 40	: 30
1925	: 25	: 28	: 33	: 27	: 20	: 20	: 16	: 23	: 25	: 39	: 29
1926	: 26	: 29	: 35	: 30	: 21	: 22	: 18	: 24	: 26	: 40	: 30
1927	: 26	: 29	: 35	: 29	: 20	: 23	: 17	: 23	: 27	: 40	: 28
1928	: 26	: 29	: 35	: 29	: 21	: 21	: 17	: 23	: 27	: 39	: 31
1929	: 26	: 29	: 35	: 28	: 22	: 23	: 16	: 25	: 26	: 39	: 32
1930	: 26	: 28	: 36	: 27	: 21	: 21	: 16	: 23	: 26	: 38	: 30
1931	: 24	: 26	: 34	: 25	: 19	: 20	: 15	: 21	: 25	: 36	: 30
1932	: 23	: 23	: 33	: 24	: 18	: 20	: 14	: 21	: 23	: 34	: 25
1933	: 22	: 22	: 33	: 23	: 17	: 20	: 16	: 19	: 21	: 36	: 25
1934	: 22	: 21	: 32	: 22	: 16	: 20	: 17	: 19	: 19	: 35	: 26
1935	: 22	: 23	: 31	: 22	: 17	: 21	: 17	: 19	: 20	: 36	: 27
1936	: 23	: 23	: 32	: 23	: 17	: 21	: 18	: 21	: 18	: 36	: 27

1/ Farm operators included.

2/ Data derived from Trends in Employment in Agriculture, 1909-36, op.cit., Table 25, p. 78.

or two work in close cooperation with the farm operator.

Of the 1,645,602 hired farm workers reported as working the equivalent of two or more days during the first week of January, 1935, 722,645 were on farms on which only one worker was hired, 130,410 were on farms on which three workers were hired, 30,672 were on farms hiring eight workers each, and 244,132 were on large-scale farms hiring ten or more each. Of the last total, 58,116 were in the South Atlantic States, 66,448 in the West South Central States, and 50,893 in the Pacific States. Four states had half of the total,—Florida with 25,609; Louisiana, 25,503; Texas, 26,641; and California, 47,737.

It should be noted that when this Census was taken, employment in most areas was at its minimum. In August 1935 it was estimated that there were 487,951 wage laborers on 20,437 farms hiring 10 or more; while on 186,837 farms hiring 3 or more, the number of laborers was estimated at 1,191,624. The total number of hired laborers on farms is estimated to have increased from 1,645,602 in January, to 2,752,883 in August of that year. 15/

The employment data from the Census of January 1935, analyzed in relation to the principal crop areas, shows that in the cotton districts a high percentage of hired labor works on farms hiring 4 or more, and also on those hiring 8 or more. (Table 9) This reflects the existence of the plantation system.

In the Range area a relatively high proportion of hired labor works on the larger farms. The same was true of the "miscellaneous" group of States, which included California and Florida. Relatively few farms in the Western Dairy, Corn, and small grain areas hired 10 or more laborers.

The geographic distribution of farms hiring 10 or more workers in January 1935, is similar to that of so-called large-scale farms. 16/ Prominent among them are truck and fruit farms, cotton plantations, crop-specialty farms, (such as those specializing in sugar cane, sugar beets, beans, tobacco, potatoes and hay) eastern dairy farms and stock ranches. (Table 10 and Figure II) A similar map for summer probably would show twice as many farms hiring 10 or more workers. The

15/ Wendzel, Julius T., Distribution of Agricultural Employment, The Agricultural Situation. Vol. 22, No. 2, February 1, 1938, p. 15.

16/ For information concerning large-scale farms, which are likely to employ labor in considerable numbers, see Jennings, R. D., Large Scale Farming in the United States, 1929. United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census; and Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Washington, 1933.

A farm, with certain exceptions, was considered large-scale if the value of its products amounted in 1929 to \$30,000 or more. Such farms were found to be widely distributed.

It should be noted that owing to the Census definition of a farm as an "operating unit," the combined "old" South, or those of a multi-unit organization of "chain" farms or "managed" farms were not

(Continued on page 32)

Table 7.- Farms hiring laborers for the equivalent of 2 or more days during the first week of January, 1935, in the United States, and numbers of laborers hired, by geographic divisions

Geographic divisions	Farms hiring												1 or more laborers not hiring	Total farms hiring and not hiring
	No laborers	1 laborer	2 laborers	3 laborers	4 laborers	5 laborers	6 laborers	7 laborers	8 laborers	9 laborers	10 or more laborers			
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
New England	120,962	26,716	6,088	1,975	944	488	311	150	126	77	404	37,279	158,241	
Middle Atlantic	304,935	72,713	18,159	3,769	1,597	804	509	245	232	94	547	93,669	397,684	
East North Central	908,391	145,921	37,937	11,329	4,259	2,150	1,004	504	289	79	481	175,296	1,083,687	
West North Central	1,024,416	132,637	31,238	11,076	6,262	3,469	2,379	1,000	1,146	433	2,856	153,440	1,179,886	
South Atlantic	960,518	126,062	31,920	11,076	6,262	3,469	2,379	1,000	1,146	433	2,856	153,440	1,179,886	
East South Central	1,043,315	166,528	44,984	1,984	2,862	1,694	1,014	441	441	254	893	137,219	1,180,534	
West South Central	1,016,132	81,766	20,133	7,128	3,984	2,395	1,543	629	713	254	899	121,439	1,137,571	
Mountain	232,111	26,287	6,640	2,330	1,261	755	519	285	213	92	859	39,281	271,392	
Pacific	234,896	41,008	10,840	4,237	2,435	1,539	1,037	533	548	296	2,198	64,671	299,567	
United States	5,844,756	722,645	137,670	43,470	22,486	12,533	8,220	3,730	3,834	1,596	11,410	967,594	6,812,350	
New England	26,716	12,176	3,776	2,440	1,866	1,050	693	7,790	1,008	493	7,790	1,008	493	
Middle Atlantic	72,713	26,318	6,132	4,020	3,054	1,715	1,856	1,715	1,856	711	8,948	1,856	711	
East North Central	148,928	36,580	12,717	6,382	3,805	3,024	1,743	1,856	1,856	946	10,848	1,856	946	
West North Central	132,637	31,238	11,966	3,795	2,424	1,435	1,448	1,435	1,448	648	5,037	1,448	648	
South Atlantic	126,062	63,840	33,228	25,180	17,040	14,274	7,210	9,184	4,041	58,116	4,041	58,116	4,041	
East South Central	66,528	29,962	14,952	11,448	8,120	6,084	2,828	3,528	1,647	14,928	1,647	14,928	1,647	
West South Central	81,766	40,266	21,384	15,935	11,975	9,258	4,403	5,704	2,265	65,448	2,265	65,448	2,265	
Mountain	26,287	6,640	2,330	1,261	755	519	285	213	92	859	213	859	213	
Pacific	41,008	21,680	12,711	6,222	3,775	3,731	1,795	1,704	828	21,124	1,795	1,704	828	
United States	722,645	275,340	130,410	89,944	62,665	49,320	26,110	30,672	14,364	244,132	14,364	244,132	14,364	
Percentages														
Farms hiring - Percent of farms hiring														
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	
New England	71.07	16.33	5.30	2.53	1.31	0.83	0.40	0.34	0.21	0.08	0.21	1.08	100.00	
Middle Atlantic	77.64	14.05	4.02	1.70	0.86	0.54	0.26	0.25	0.10	0.05	0.05	0.58	100.00	
East North Central	84.97	24.43	2.42	1.87	0.43	0.29	0.14	0.13	0.05	0.02	0.02	0.27	100.00	
West North Central	85.33	10.05	2.40	1.01	0.49	0.26	0.13	0.12	0.05	0.02	0.02	0.16	100.00	
South Atlantic	67.55	17.10	5.94	3.37	1.83	1.27	0.55	0.24	0.13	0.05	0.05	0.13	100.00	
East South Central	70.85	15.95	5.31	3.05	1.73	1.08	0.43	0.24	0.13	0.05	0.05	0.13	100.00	
West South Central	67.33	16.58	5.87	3.28	1.97	1.27	0.52	0.21	0.13	0.05	0.05	0.21	100.00	
Mountain	66.93	16.76	6.85	3.21	1.92	1.32	0.73	0.54	0.23	0.09	0.09	0.23	100.00	
Pacific	83.41	16.76	6.85	3.77	2.38	1.60	0.85	0.85	0.46	0.23	0.23	0.46	100.00	
United States	74.68	14.23	4.49	2.32	1.30	0.85	0.39	0.40	0.16	0.08	0.08	0.16	100.00	
Farms hiring - Percent of total farms hiring and not hiring														
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	
New England	76.44	16.87	3.85	1.25	0.60	0.31	0.20	0.09	0.08	0.05	0.26	23.56	100.00	
Middle Atlantic	83.82	13.75	2.42	1.87	0.43	0.29	0.14	0.13	0.05	0.02	0.02	0.14	100.00	
East North Central	85.31	17.16	5.94	3.97	1.39	0.83	0.43	0.42	0.16	0.05	0.05	0.16	100.00	
West North Central	85.63	11.24	1.32	0.32	0.13	0.06	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.13	100.00	
South Atlantic	83.73	10.98	2.78	0.91	0.55	0.30	0.21	0.09	0.04	0.02	0.04	0.25	100.00	
East South Central	91.74	5.84	1.32	0.44	0.35	0.21	0.09	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.08	100.00	
West South Central	89.32	7.19	1.77	0.63	0.35	0.21	0.14	0.06	0.06	0.02	0.02	0.25	100.00	
Mountain	85.53	9.68	2.45	0.86	0.46	0.28	0.19	0.11	0.08	0.03	0.03	0.33	100.00	
Pacific	78.41	13.70	3.62	1.41	0.81	0.51	0.35	0.18	0.18	0.03	0.03	0.33	100.00	
United States	85.80	10.61	2.02	0.64	0.33	0.18	0.12	0.05	0.06	0.02	0.17	24.20	100.00	
Laborers - Percent of total laborers														
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	
New England	42.11	19.19	9.34	5.95	3.85	2.94	1.66	1.59	1.09	1.09	1.09	1.09	100.00	
Middle Atlantic	52.30	18.92	8.13	4.59	2.89	2.20	1.23	1.33	0.83	0.83	0.83	0.83	100.00	
East North Central	56.34	16.29	5.67	2.73	1.70	1.35	0.78	0.83	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	100.00	
West North Central	67.62	15.92	5.71	3.21	1.93	1.34	0.73	0.73	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	100.00	
South Atlantic	35.19	17.62	9.28	7.03	4.76	3.99	2.01	2.86	1.13	1.13	1.13	1.13	100.00	
East South Central	41.58	18.73	9.34	7.15	5.07	3.80	2.00	2.86	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	100.00	
West South Central	31.52	18.52	8.34	6.14	4.62	3.57	1.70	2.20	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	100.00	
Mountain	31.24	15.78	8.31	5.99	4.49	3.70	2.37	2.03	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	100.00	
Pacific	25.51	13.49	7.91	6.06	4.79	3.67	2.32	2.73	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	100.00	
United States	43.91	16.73	7.92	5.47	3.81	3.00	1.59	1.56	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	100.00	

Table 8. Numbers of hired laborers on farms reporting specified numbers of hired laborers working the equivalent of two or more days in the first week of January, 1935

Number of laborers on farms reporting hired laborers of the following numbers														
One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight	Nine	Ten or more	Total Number	Hiring no laborers	Total Number	Hiring one or more laborers	Farms
United States														
722,645	275,340	130,410	89,944	62,665	49,320	26,110	30,672	11,354	244,132	1,645,602	5,844,756	6,812,350	967,594	
New England														
26,716	12,176	5,925	3,776	2,440	1,866	1,050	1,008	693	7,790	63,440	120,942	159,211	37,279	
6,156	3,156	1,575	972	600	306	110	136	63	478	11,410	136	11,546	7,921	
2,985	1,260	578	343	200	84	70	72	54	432	6,067	13,703	19,764	7,921	
6,499	2,200	693	402	200	174	105	80	36	397	10,822	18,984	27,695	17,695	
5,466	3,518	2,073	1,132	688	427	196	146	315	3,708	19,247	26,120	45,367	8,977	
710	470	270	176	105	66	42	96	90	481	2,536	3,160	5,697	1,167	
4,916	2,526	1,344	776	555	346	266	168	135	2,284	13,228	25,004	38,237	7,153	
Middle Atlantic														
72,713	26,318	11,307	6,388	4,020	3,051	1,715	1,856	816	10,818	139,065	304,015	443,080	93,669	
37,714	12,958	5,604	2,924	1,860	1,264	781	884	356	3,396	67,751	129,194	196,945	47,821	
5,826	3,380	1,701	1,176	735	558	322	336	114	2,944	17,182	20,197	37,379	17,085	
29,143	9,980	4,002	2,288	1,365	1,230	609	696	351	4,508	54,132	154,324	208,456	36,960	
East North Central														
118,928	36,580	12,717	6,132	3,805	3,024	1,713	1,856	711	8,948	224,444	498,391	722,836	175,286	
30,354	7,906	3,045	1,696	1,050	906	490	612	318	3,142	49,537	108,519	158,056	28,679	
22,677	5,404	2,007	1,040	606	402	280	312	108	2,068	34,070	74,156	108,226	38,287	
32,646	7,800	2,898	1,340	810	588	371	352	225	2,499	49,484	102,985	152,469	38,287	
26,075	5,662	2,250	1,181	865	576	313	352	225	2,499	39,192	166,076	205,268	30,111	
17,136	9,768	2,577	1,872	1,170	348	189	192	108	731	34,551	156,547	191,097	43,330	
West North Central														
132,637	31,238	11,196	6,300	3,795	2,121	1,135	1,148	618	5,937	106,158	1,024,116	1,130,274	155,440	
57,635	5,678	2,111	772	1,110	222	217	120	81	1,170	49,816	170,265	219,081	33,019	
22,827	6,966	2,118	1,040	595	342	161	168	54	1,118	48,532	101,646	150,178	221,996	
9,176	2,284	717	408	180	102	119	128	88	1,977	10,712	23,359	34,071	28,995	
5,969	1,284	395	116	66	42	24	21	116	56	13,495	72,781	86,276	18,509	
13,703	2,553	1,187	544	335	208	175	128	145	557	8,209	77,167	85,376	6,693	
15,677	4,674	1,896	1,156	760	462	221	192	72	721	26,034	117,524	143,558	16,105	
South Atlantic														
126,062	63,400	35,228	25,180	17,040	11,271	7,210	9,184	4,041	58,116	358,175	960,518	1,117,333	186,615	
16,940	5,944	2,071	1,200	840	500	265	408	180	1,694	30,957	89,816	120,771	10,381	
9,975	5,271	2,160	1,226	862	570	344	468	200	1,881	22,973	30,273	51,246	11,133	
District of Columbia														
23,109	10,812	5,238	3,188	2,010	1,734	770	928	576	3,945	52,310	165,255	217,565	32,479	
7,930	3,934	1,380	816	570	504	128	152	145	3,995	15,092	94,333	109,425	187,632	
North Carolina	29,480	11,328	5,880	3,696	2,490	1,818	1,005	441	2,375	59,321	261,804	301,121	39,163	
South Carolina	15,500	10,290	5,157	3,480	2,898	1,095	1,218	954	6,993	53,110	139,737	165,844	30,947	
Georgia	26,197	9,156	7,552	5,205	4,482	2,315	3,056	1,278	16,469	91,158	207,813	256,971	42,701	
Florida	12,071	7,280	4,153	3,700	2,239	1,141	1,456	549	25,609	60,287	52,642	250,544	20,215	
East South Central														
66,228	29,962	11,932	11,418	8,120	6,081	2,828	3,328	1,647	11,928	160,025	1,043,335	1,137,219	93,904	
Kentucky	16,940	7,558	3,909	2,184	1,180	518	518	270	3,695	36,915	254,879	278,898	29,349	
Tennessee	18,659	8,198	3,693	2,532	1,525	553	608	340	2,412	39,496	216,351	255,849	15,999	
Alabama	19,206	8,254	3,644	2,895	2,112	1,099	1,180	621	4,416	48,072	216,181	273,255	17,576	
Mississippi	11,715	5,582	3,075	2,768	2,230	1,602	592	366	6,126	55,542	93,904	171,779	31,683	
West South Central														
81,766	40,266	21,381	15,956	11,975	9,258	4,403	5,704	2,286	66,148	259,126	1,016,132	1,214,239	121,439	
Arkansas	10,010	5,568	3,111	2,050	1,404	763	1,136	369	3,201	27,074	237,014	255,013	15,999	
Louisiana	15,697	6,651	4,023	3,169	2,092	1,043	1,336	513	25,303	56,116	386,657	438,761	17,576	
Oklahoma	15,717	7,170	4,192	3,408	2,000	957	536	171	1,303	31,591	136,449	213,325	66,845	
Texas	45,770	22,654	11,528	8,108	6,290	4,992	2,696	1,233	26,641	131,992	434,172	501,017	50,017	
Mountain														
26,287	13,280	6,990	5,044	3,775	3,114	1,995	1,704	828	21,121	84,111	232,111	271,392	39,281	
Montana	5,408	2,580	1,221	956	550	280	232	108	1,513	13,523	28,717	71,817	7,617	
Idaho	4,032	1,721	928	590	306	175	176	72	622	8,812	19,618	50,564	5,944	
Wyoming	2,182	1,180	768	390	231	184	145	62	1,257	7,001	14,983	34,445	4,445	
Colorado	6,040	3,192	1,706	1,060	546	448	296	162	832	15,228	54,083	71,317	17,467	
New Mexico	3,694	2,020	987	776	462	280	232	114	1,129	11,344	23,749	63,444	7,468	
Arizona	2,351	1,400	888	632	340	343	496	135	13,621	20,941	31,527	41,369	7,468	
Utah	1,645	1,020	1,077	722	310	175	112	81	795	5,183	28,087	18,624	18,624	
Nevada	503	352	222	160	120	65	56	81	395	2,066	2,811	50,695	30,695	
Pacific														
41,008	21,680	12,711	9,740	6,595	6,222	3,731	4,384	2,664	50,893	160,728	234,896	299,657	61,671	
Washington	7,321	3,344	1,896	1,180	815	570	322	207	1,431	17,568	73,936	104,455	10,445	
Oregon	6,203	2,816	1,425	912	640	651	377	215	1,725	15,287	56,058	84,340	8,768	
California	27,124	15,520	9,790	7,648	6,240	4,998	2,992	2,244	47,737	127,873	104,902	159,360	45,158	

Table 9. - Distribution of hired farm laborers in principal farming areas by number of laborers employed per farm, January 1935 ^{1/}

Area	: Number of	: Number of:		: Percentage of hired	
	: farms re-	: farms re-	Total	: laborers on farms	
	: porting no	: porting	: number of	: reporting	
	: hired	: hired	: hired	: 4 or	: 8 or
	: laborers	: laborers	: laborers	: more	: more
	: Number	Number	Number	Percent	Percent
United States	: 5,844,756	967,594	1,645,602	31.4	17.6
Corn	: 767,108	142,171	181,433	11.9	5.3
Eastern dairy	: 367,327	112,989	171,347	22.1	10.7
Western dairy	: 492,906	106,790	130,389	8.0	3.0
Middle eastern	: 1,055,043	144,885	226,304	23.1	8.3
Eastern cotton	: 593,761	95,742	192,670	40.9	19.2
Delta cotton	: 685,615	51,297	131,932	54.5	37.4
Western cotton	: 626,421	87,921	163,036	36.1	20.0
Small grain	: 465,681	60,997	81,561	14.1	4.9
Range	: 149,746	25,969	61,806	50.3	33.9
Northwestern	: 169,612	24,708	41,667	28.9	12.3
Miscellaneous	: 473,536	114,125	263,457	49.7	34.0

^{1/} Data are derived from "Distribution of Hired Farm Laborers in the United States," by Julius T. Wendzel, Monthly Labor Review, Vol. 45, No. 3, Sept. 1937, pp 561-3. The information was derived from the special Agricultural Census of 1935. Employment during most of the year is normally larger than in January.

TABLE 10

Percentage Distribution of Hired Farm Laborers in the United States by Geographic Divisions,
and by Age, 1930

Geographic division	Laborers in specified age groups: Percent of total in division														Percentages of total farm laborers									
	10-14 years		15-17 years		18-19 years		20-24 years		25-29 years		30-39 years		40-49 years		50-59 years		60-64 years		65 years or more		Age unknown		Pct.	
	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	
New England	0.3	6.2	7.1	16.1	11.2	16.6	15.3	13.6	5.6	7.9	0.1	3.5												
Middle Atlantic	.4	6.4	7.9	16.3	11.0	16.5	14.8	13.0	5.5	8.1	.1	8.2												
East North Central	.3	6.1	9.8	22.0	13.1	16.0	12.0	10.3	4.2	6.1	.1	15.1												
West North Central	.5	6.2	10.6	27.4	15.4	15.8	10.2	7.6	2.7	3.5	.1	15.2												
South Atlantic	2.9	9.2	10.6	22.0	12.4	15.6	11.2	8.8	3.0	4.2	.1	18.7												
East South Central	2.5	8.9	11.0	23.7	12.9	14.8	10.1	8.5	3.0	4.5	.1	9.9												
West South Central	2.0	7.9	10.9	24.0	13.8	16.0	11.2	7.9	2.7	3.5	.1	14.5												
Mountain	.7	5.5	8.7	21.6	14.2	18.4	14.1	9.3	3.3	4.1	.1	5.7												
Pacific	.2	3.0	6.0	16.7	13.5	19.6	17.6	13.1	4.4	5.8	.1	9.2												
United States	1.3	6.9	9.7	22.1	13.3	16.3	12.3	9.6	3.5	4.9	.1	100.0												

Source: Unpublished information furnished by the Bureau of the Census

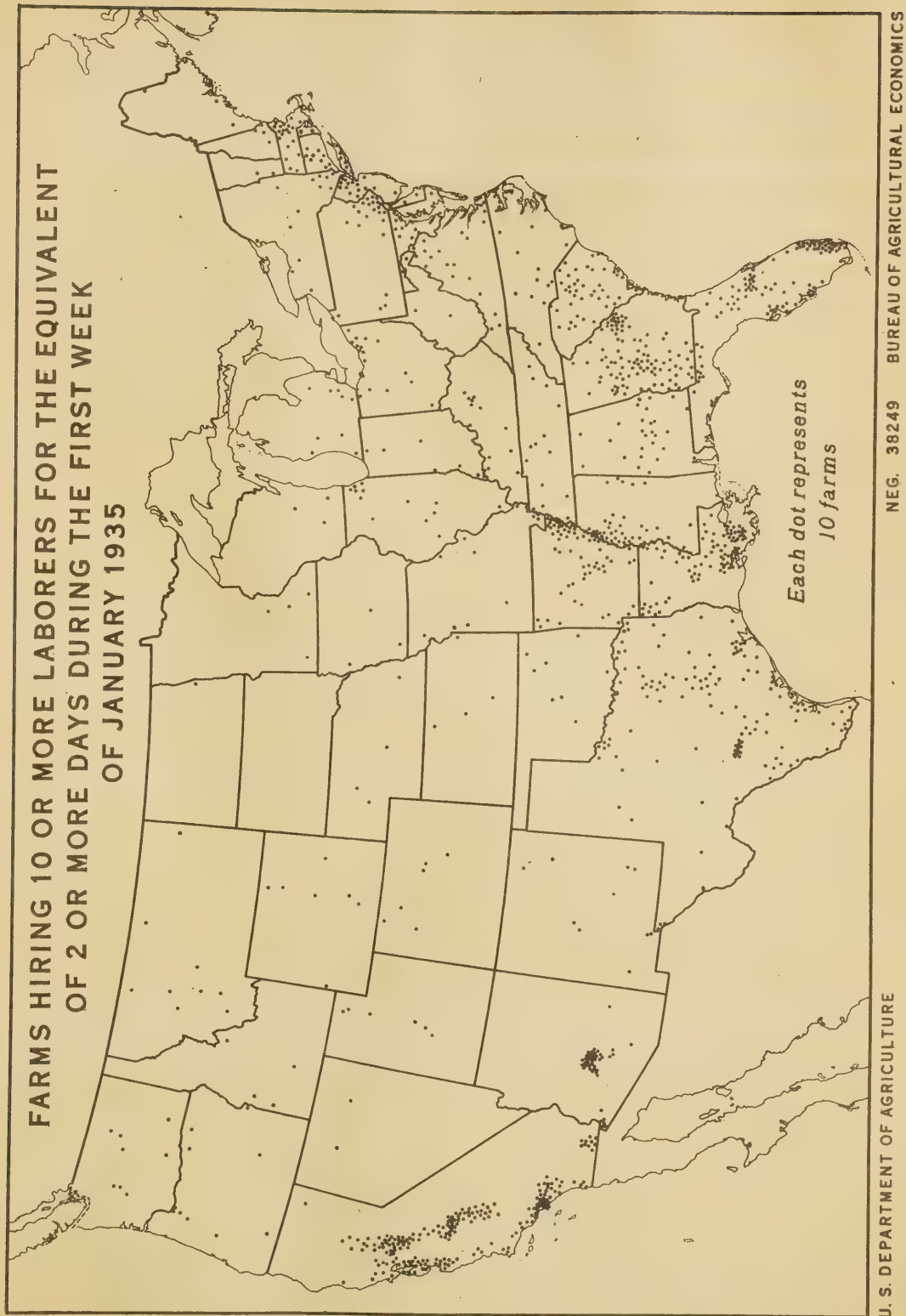


FIGURE 2

2,727,000 hired laborers scattered about on the farms of America, at the time of the Census of April, 1930, were of diverse types and characteristics.

B. CHARACTERISTICS

1. Racial and National Origins

With respect to race of the farm wage workers in 1930, 66.7 percent were native whites, 19.7 percent were negroes, and 6.8 percent were foreign-born whites, as compared with percentages of 62.7, 34.5, and 0.8, respectively, among unpaid family workers. (Table 11)

This predominantly native-born character of the hired farm workers contradicts a popular impression. In surveys made by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in 1936, in 11 counties in as many States, nearly two-thirds of the 3,879 hired laborers interviewed reported they were born in the State in which they were found working. In some areas where people of foreign birth have settled in large numbers, they retain the languages and customs of their old homes to such an extent that their American-born children are often mistaken for aliens. This, for example, is true of the Mexicans in the Southwest. It needs to be emphasized that the hired farm laborers of the United States are now almost exclusively native-born Americans. The foreign-born, largely Orientals and Mexicans, are concentrated in California and the Southwest.

2. Age and Sex Groups

1930

Most farm laborers are men. Only 171,000, or 6 percent of the total, were women. The larger part of these were negroes in the South.

As regards the age of hired farm workers, in 1930 about 18 percent of them were under 20 years, as compared with over 60 percent of the unpaid family workers. About half of the hired workers were more than 30 years of age. Concerning child labor in agriculture, very little appears in the Census data on the hired laborers, probably because it was not reported. In New England, the Middle Atlantic States, and on the Pacific Coast, a larger proportion of the hired workers than elsewhere were in the upper age groups. (Table 10)

3. Dependents

Other information with respect to the personal characteristics of hired farm laborers is derived from a few special studies in widely scattered areas, such as those carried on by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in 1936. Data were secured from one county in each of 11 States. About half of the hired farm laborers were married.

16/ (Continued from page 26)

included in the Jennings study. Thus, the combined operations of some of the large fruit, truck, cotton-growing and livestock production companies were excluded save as a part or all of their operating units may have been included as large-scale farms.

The average amount spent for hired labor on the large-scale farms was \$13,385 as compared with an average of only \$363 by all farms reporting hired labor in the United States in 1929.

TABLE 11

Percentage Distribution of All Farm Laborers in the United States by Wage, Classes,
Race and Age, 1930

Class and race of laborers	Laborers in specified age groups: Percentage of total in class												Percentage : of total
	10-13	14-15	16-17	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-64	65 years	Age	hired lab- : orers in
	years	years	years	years	years	years	years	years	years	years	or more	unknown	ers in
	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	class
Unpaid family workers:													
Native white	9.0	12.1	22.9	19.1	21.2	6.2	5.0	2.1	1.1	0.4	0.9	1/	23.7
Foreign-born white	0.2	1.6	8.5	10.6	19.4	9.7	11.1	10.5	9.2	5.0	14.2	1/	0.3
Negro	15.7	14.9	17.9	13.4	15.1	6.1	7.5	5.2	2.7	0.7	0.8	1/	13.1
Other races	11.9	11.6	18.1	15.5	22.9	8.4	6.3	2.4	1.4	0.5	1.0	1/	0.7
Wage workers													
Native white	0.4	1.4	6.1	10.8	24.6	13.8	15.7	10.7	8.6	3.2	4.6	0.1	41.5
Foreign-born white	1/	0.1	0.8	1.9	8.0	9.3	18.3	22.9	19.2	8.1	11.3	0.1	4.2
Negro	1.9	3.6	7.1	9.7	19.7	11.7	15.8	12.6	9.7	3.4	4.7	0.1	12.3
Other races	1.0	1.6	4.0	6.9	18.8	15.9	21.2	16.2	9.2	2.5	2.6	0.1	4.2
All classes	4.7	6.0	11.5	12.4	21.0	10.6	12.4	8.9	6.6	2.4	3.4	0.1	100.0

1/ Less than one-tenth of one percent

Source: Unpublished information furnished by the Bureau of the Census.

Nearly half of the laborers had dependents, consisting most often of a wife only; nearly as frequently there were also one or two children.

4. Place of Residence

The question of the previous experience and environment of farm workers is important. Are they country folk or do they come from the towns and cities? Have they worked at other occupations? On these matters information is very inadequate. Of a total of 620 farm wage workers in 17 counties in Texas, according to information secured from the Farm Security Administration, in the summer of 1938, one-third were from the open country, one-fourth were living in villages of less than 2,500 population, one-third were from cities having between 2,500 and 25,000 inhabitants, and the rest were from larger cities.

Of 1,237 transient harvest workers interviewed in North Dakota in the summer of 1938, 37 percent had their permanent homes on farms. Almost 20 percent gave addresses in villages of less than 2,500 population, while 43 percent were from larger places.

5. Previous Work Experience and Occupational Training

In the same State, at the same time, 3,297 farm workers told of their previous employment and trade experience. Of this number 612 were non-farm persons of local origin working in the harvest, 868 were farm family-workers, and 1,405 were transients. Six percent of the farm family-workers stated that they had learned a skilled trade, as did 18 percent of the local harvest workers, and 30.5 percent of the transients. Among the total of 641 workers who had learned a skilled trade, over half claimed experience as mechanics and artisans. The next highest occupation was "transportation and communications," which accounted for 12.3 percent. This was followed by the retail "trade group" with 11.5 percent. Nine other occupations had scattered representation.

Sixty-three percent of 3,285 workers of all types stated that their usual work was in agriculture; similarly some 69 percent of the local harvest workers, and 57 percent of the transients. However, it is significant that some 64 percent of the transients held Social Security cards, showing they had worked in some nonagricultural employment covered by the Social Security Act.^{17/} This was true also of about 40 percent of the local harvest workers, 12 percent of the male workers hired for the season or year, and 12 percent of the unpaid male farm family workers.

6. Previous Farm Tenure Status

What proportion of the hired laborers has had previous farm experience as owners, tenants, or sharecroppers? Of the 2,315 farm laborers interviewed in 10 counties in as many States by Bureau of Agricultural Economics investigators in 1936, 63 percent had no experience in a higher tenure status, about 6 percent had been
^{17/} It was not customary in North Dakota for the Employment Service to request agricultural registrants to obtain Social Security cards.

owners, 10 percent had been tenants, and 25 percent had been sharecroppers. Among 1,630 hired workers on New Jersey farms that same year, about 92 percent had had no other tenure experience, 4 percent had been owners, 4 percent had been tenants, and less than 1 percent had been croppers. Fourteen percent of 620 agricultural workers interviewed in 17 counties in Texas in 1938, according to the Farm Security Administration, had been farm operators at some time subsequent to 1929.

In general, it appears from these scattered studies that in all areas the majority of farm laborers have had no experience in a higher tenure status on the farm, but in some areas, especially in the South, there is a significant proportion of farm workers who have fallen from a higher rung of the ladder of farm tenure.

7. Classes of Hired Farm Laborers

Of much significance are the farm worker classifications according to duration of employment and type of relationship with the farm operators. Unfortunately, in these connections, no Census data are available.

All too often, in agricultural circles, farm labor is dismissed with casual reference to the "typical hired man" on the family-size farm, as though the importance of all other forms of farm labor were negligible. On the other hand, in nonagricultural circles it is all too commonly assumed that only migratory farm laborers have problems worthy of attention. Both assumptions are faulty. Although in many areas the status of the migratory farm laborer is unsatisfactory in the extreme, and requires all the attention that it can get, so too do the following problems: the plight of local residents who are deprived of seasonal jobs because of the farmer's use of migratory workers; the changing status of the "hired man" in the Middle West; the difficulties of the Southern sharecropper and the Southern wage hand; and the position of the contract laborer on sugar beets from Michigan to California.

Differences in economic and social problems and status suggest the following system of classifying hired farm laborers:

1. The "hired man" who lives on the farm
2. The regularly-employed farm hand who lives off the farm
3. The seasonally-employed farm hand who is a local resident
4. The seasonally-employed farm hand who is not a local resident but who is not "migratory"
5. The migratory seasonal farm laborer
6. The "contract" laborer of the sugar beet areas

A separate class also might be included for seasonal gang labor because this system of employment gives rise to problems different from those of other seasonal labor.

Some would add a class for sharecroppers, in view of the many similarities between their economic status and that of hired labor.

Save for the sharecroppers, who are largely concentrated in the South, no adequate information is available as to the numbers of persons in each of these various classes of farm laborers.

In 1935, 716,000 sharecroppers were reported, and 541,000 in 1940. It is commonly assumed that most of the 1,645,602 wage workers reported working on farms for a period of two or more days during the first week in January 1935, were fairly regularly employed workers, since otherwise they would not have been at work at that time of least employment. It is not known how many of these were "typical hired hands," regularly-employed dairy workers, local residents fairly regularly engaged on nearby farms, and the like. In August 1935, according to an estimate, in addition to the 1,645,602 wage workers referred to above, some 1,107,281 other hired hands were at work on the farms of the United States. Most of these would undoubtedly be classed as "seasonal", but no one can say with certainty how many were migratory workers or local residents or wage hands resident on or near farms.

C. WOMEN AND CHILD WORKERS

The center of interest in this discussion of labor on the farm is the hired workers, as distinct from the unpaid working members of the farm operator's family. Accordingly, we are at a disadvantage in treating the labor of women and children on the farm, since by far the larger number of them are members of the farm operator's family. The number of hired child and female workers, however, is undoubtedly in excess of the figures reported in the Census. This is the case, first, because the occupational census of 1930 was taken on April 1, at a time when relatively few workers of these classes are employed. In the second place, the Census did not enumerate the occupations of persons under ten years of age, although it is known that younger children do considerable work on farms. And finally, the hired employment of **women and children on farms** is likely to be obscured by the fact that they are frequently members of the family of a hired male laborer, who alone is reported in the Census since he receives the wages earned by all members of the group.

1. Women in Farm Work

Successive censuses have reported a gradual decline in the number of women in agricultural occupations. On April 1, 1930, a total of 909,939 women were thus occupied, making up about one-twelfth of all persons engaged in agriculture. (Table 12) ^{18/} The majority of women farm laborers are native-born; and of these, two-thirds are Negroes. Because of the immigration restrictions of the last 25 years, foreign-born women are now rare among farm workers except in the case of such groups as the Mexicans in sugar beet areas, and the Italians in some Atlantic Coast truck farming sections. Women make up a considerable proportion of the migratory labor which follows the truck and fruit crop harvests and picks cotton in Texas, Arizona, and California.

The work done by women farm workers is varied. Usually it does not include much heavy and prolonged physical labor. Much of their activity consists of weeding, hoeing, and picking truck crops and small fruits, also cutting, grading, and packing for shipment to market. In the sugar beet areas, particularly east of the Rocky Mountains, women take part in all hand operations. In cotton areas they chop and pick; in tobacco areas they hoe, top, and sucker.

^{18/} United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, Population, Volume V, General Report on Occupations, p. 76.

Table 12 - Women engaged in agriculture, April 1, 1930 1/

Geographic division	:	:	Farm Laborers	
			Unpaid family workers	Wage Workers
	:	Total <u>2/</u>		
	:	Number	Number	Number
New England	:	6,281	772	1,185
Middle Atlantic	:	16,301	2,148	3,227
East North Central	:	37,946	4,958	4,446
West North Central	:	44,761	8,571	5,033
South Atlantic	:	289,344	153,195	78,906
East South Central	:	293,133	194,307	35,066
West South Central	:	188,817	106,594	35,152
Mountain	:	13,896	2,827	3,163
Pacific	:	19,460	1,636	5,145
United States	:	909,939	475,008	171,323

- 1/ United States, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, Population, Volume IV, Occupations by States, Compiled from State Tables 4.
- 2/ Includes farm operators, managers, and foreman, as well as farm laborers.

Little information is available concerning the wages of women farm laborers in this country. At piecework rates on tasks requiring quickness and skill rather than strength, as in truck crop or small fruit picking, women are usually able to earn as much as men in the same working time. Their efficiency, in heavier tasks, as compared with that of men, is difficult to measure. In cotton areas a woman is apt to be called a three-quarter hand or half-hand, indicating roughly her comparative capacity.

Living conditions for female laborers who engage in seasonal farm work away from their regular homes are likely to be unsatisfactory. Farm employers usually provide only the minimum of housing and housekeeping facilities, if any. Quarters are frequently only makeshift, such as old buildings temporarily cleared of farm equipment and never intended for human dwellings. ^{19/}

Little attention has been paid to the effect of living and working conditions upon the health of women farm laborers in the United States, or to the indirect effect upon their families. It is evident that one effect must be the enforced slighting of home work and attention to children. ^{20/} Fatigue and lack of time prevent giving proper attention for food preparation, care of children and of dwelling. Pressure for time frequently necessitates serving of foods easiest to prepare, but not conducive to family health. Children are often left to the care of others slightly older, or are taken to the fields.

2. Child Labor on Farms: Extent.

Agriculture, even in its inactive season, is the Nation's principal employer of child labor, according to the Census. How much larger an employer it is in rush seasons can only be surmised. In some areas it has been known that two or three times as many child laborers have been at work on farms as were reported by the Census. ^{21/} The 1930 Census of Occupations reported that 70 percent of employed children between 10 and 16 years old were engaged in agriculture.

In April 1930, 469,497 young people 10 to 15 years of age were reported by that Census to be gainfully employed as farm laborers. (Table 13) Nearly half of these child wage workers, and 54.6 percent of the unpaid family workers were whites. In each class, nearly 4

^{19/} The President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, (Washington, D.C. 1932) Farm and Village Housing, pp. 195-209.

^{20/} United States Department of Labor, Children's Bureau, Child Labor and the Work of Mothers on Norfolk Truck Farms, Bureau Publication 130, Washington, D. C., 1924, p. 24.

^{21/} Putney, Bryant, "Control of Child Labor," Editorial Research Reports, Vol. 1, No. 20, May 26, 1937, p. 396, footnote 9.

out of 9 were Negroes. 22/

Causes

Any discussion of child labor in agriculture must, of course distinguish on the one hand between (1) the performance of chores on the home farm, ordinarily a beneficial process, or (2) the employment of boys and girls, properly safeguarded, during periods that do not conflict with schooling, at tasks which do not tax their strength; and (3) on the other hand, the sort of child labor which is physically or educationally harmful. Even on the home farm, unfortunately, economic circumstances are frequently such as to force the owners', tenants', or croppers' children to work longer and harder than is good for them, or than is good in the long run for the community.

The children of the wage laborer in agriculture are peculiarly subject to the economic ills which beset the lives of their parents. These children frequently start work at an age lower than would be permitted in industry; they work under conditions that are not regulated, for unlimited hours; their education is neglected; and their earnings, though necessary to the family budget, are meagre. For single men working steadily at farm labor the wages are, at best none too high; for married men earnings are usually so low that additional income from other members of the family is indispensable. When wages are cut or unemployment occurs, the situation becomes worse. Consequently, farm laborers by the thousands are forced to work their wives and children, with little regard to the ultimate consequences.

The farm work which children do is varied and extensive. 23/ Much of it is "stopp" work--tasks like weeding, picking strawberries, truck crops, and prunes. The sugar beet crop has always been a large user of child labor. Children chop cotton and pick it wherever it is grown. Tobacco production involves a series of operations often performed by children--transplanting, hoeing, topping, suckering, worming, and harvesting. Truck farm work done by children includes transplanting, thinning, hoeing, weeding, harvesting; and harvesting may mean cutting, pulling, or picking followed by trimming, washing, grading, bunching, and packing. The variety of truck crops and operations is large. Fruit work done by children is largely confined to the picking of small fruits.

22/ Compiled from unpublished data furnished by the Bureau of the Census.

23/ White House Conference on Child Health and Protection, Section III, Education and Training, Committee D, Vocational Guidance and Child Labor, Report of the Subcommittee on Child Labor, Child Labor, Century Company, New York, N. Y. 1932, pp 219-261.

Table 13. - Child laborers in agriculture, April 1, 1930, 1/

Geographic division	: Number of Farm workers - all ages	Child Workers				
		: Number		: Percent of all workers		
		: 10-13 : 14-15		: 10-13 : 14-15		
		: years : years		: years : years		
		Number	Number	Number	Percent	Percent
Unpaid family workers						
New England	: 10,102	226	879	2.2	8.7	
Middle Atlantic	: 33,017	429	2,680	1.3	8.1	
East North Central	: 117,435	1,663	8,297	1.4	7.1	
West North Central	: 176,271	4,058	13,987	2.3	7.9	
South Atlantic	: 452,571	58,219	68,718	12.9	15.2	
East South Central	: 31,511	77,548	72,077	16.1	15.0	
West South Central	: 240,304	42,997	44,786	12.6	13.2	
Mountain	: 32,601	1,734	2,952	5.3	9.1	
Pacific	: 15,980	305	789	1.9	4.9	
United States	: 1,659,792	187,179	215,165	11.3	13.0	
Wage workers						
New England	: 96,086	58	1,111	.1	1.2	
Middle Atlantic	: 223,201	277	2,358	.1	1.1	
East North Central	: 412,087	426	3,618	.1	.9	
West North Central	: 414,478	739	4,729	.2	1.1	
South Atlantic	: 511,219	7,885	17,173	1.5	3.4	
East South Central	: 272,426	3,858	7,499	1.4	2.8	
West South Central	: 395,821	4,397	9,593	1.1	2.4	
Mountain	: 156,391	551	1,700	.4	1.1	
Pacific	: 251,263	193	983	.1	.4	
United States	: 2,732,972	18,384	48,769	.7	1.8	

1/ Compiled from unpublished data furnished by the Bureau of the Census.

The South is the area in which child labor, both hired and family labor, is most common, particularly the East South Central and South Atlantic States, with their truck and berry crops, cotton, and tobacco. Fourteen States, all of them Southern except Missouri, employ practically nine-tenths of the total child workers of the ages 10-15 (wage workers plus unpaid family workers). 24/

There is close relationship between the proportion of child workers in agriculture and that of farms operated by croppers. It is the practice in the South to allot croppers land in proportion to the number of "hoe-hands" in their families. Large families get the preference. Consequently use of child labor rises with increase in numbers of cropper farms. While the cropper children work with and for their parents, they are practically hired employees of the landlord.

3. Effects on Children

It is frequently asserted that the health and education of children suffer from much of the work which they do on the farms. Some of the permanent effects on the physique of the children are discernible only to the skilled observer. Lowered vitality in later life may result, due to the strain of cramped postures on undeveloped muscles and bones. Late fall chill and dampness may cause colds and bring on complications.

Risks to health may not be serious, if not prolonged. But too often the work is carried on under heavy pressure to get crops off to market or to save them from weather injury. A majority of children in some types of work put in days of 8 or 10 hours, or longer. Such rush work may last several weeks, weather permitting.

As regards school attendance and the scholastic attainments of child workers, numerous surveys and the data of the census testify to the ill effects of farm employment. Child labor in the South is accompanied by short school terms, low attendance, and a high percentage of illiteracy among both Whites and Negroes. Two recent studies of child laborers in New Jersey reported that they had lost an average of 39 days of school attendance 25/; and that at least two out of five of those children were retarded. 26/

-
- 24/ Unpublished data supplied by the U. S. Bureau of the Census
25/ Report of the Commission to Investigate the Employment of Migratory Children in the State of New Jersey, Trenton, N. J., 1931. pp. 67-90.
26/ National Child Labor Committee, A Summer in the Country, Publication 377, New York, N. Y., March 1939, pp. 24-27.

A Pacific Northwest study showed that nearly two-fifths of a group of migratory children were retarded from one to three years in school. ^{27/} The finding was not much better among children of nonmigratory hop pickers. They also were out of school for long periods.

The right of children to a common school education is well recognized in this country. But too many children of farm laborers are still deprived of it. California is making a notable start in providing schools intended to follow the major movements of migrant farm laborers, to relieve local schools of the demoralization caused by entrance and departure of large groups of non-resident children, and to provide the migrants with school facilities patronized largely by their own class of pupils.

4. Regulation of Child Labor in Agriculture

The evils of child employment in agriculture have long been recognized. They have been condemned by the Sixth National Conference on Labor Legislation, by the Interstate Conference on Migratory Labor held at Baltimore in February 1940, and by the White House Conference for Children in Democracy. However, only a very few States have as yet attempted any kind of regulation, and the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act does not apply to agriculture.

Child labor laws fixing minimum age for employment--the accepted method of regulating other forms of child labor--are largely ineffective in dealing with this phase of the problem. State child labor laws either exempt agriculture altogether, or set no minimum age for such employment outside school hours and during school vacations, at which times most agricultural work is performed. Even those laws which nominally apply are not enforced in practice for children in agricultural work, because of opposition to the regulation of such work, and because of difficulties in inspection.

Compulsory school attendance laws have been a more effective means of regulation. This has been true in spite of many difficulties, including: (1) Children leaving school early to go to the country to work, and returning late; (2) pressure on local school authorities to close the schools for "crop vacation"; (3) absence of school facilities for children of migratory families who follow the crops.

Half a dozen States have adopted some regulation of agricultural

^{27/} Sidel, James E., Pick for your Supper, National Child Labor Committee, New York, N.Y. June, 1939, Publication 378, pp. 24-36.

employment of minors. California has applied to agriculture the provisions of its regular child labor law relating to ages and hours of employment. Massachusetts and Pennsylvania require special employment certificates for children going into agriculture. The Wisconsin Industrial Commission was given authority to regulate the work of children under 16 in certain types of industrialized agriculture and has issued one order applying to child employment in beet fields. Nebraska has also limited the hours of child beet workers.

Pennsylvania and New Jersey prohibit the employment in agricultural work of out-of-State children who have not complied with the educational requirements of their home States. Maine and Kentucky apply their regular compulsory school attendance laws to migratory children.

The Sugar Act of 1937 ^{28/} provides that sugar beet and sugar-cane producers who receive government payments authorized in the Act may not directly or indirectly employ on the crop any children under 14 years of age, except their own, nor allow children between the ages of 14 and 16 to work longer than 8 hours in any one day on the crop. No comprehensive survey has been made of the effects of this Act, but there is evidence that the amount of child labor employed on sugar crop production has been reduced. ^{29/}

^{28/} Public Law 414, 75th Congress, First Session, Section 301 (a)

^{29/} "Child Labor in Sugar Beet Fields," The Child, Vol. 1, No. 11. May 1937, p. 17.

D. SHARECROPPERS

1. A Type of Farm Labor

The 1935 Census reported 716,000 sharecroppers in 16 Southern States, representing 39 percent of all tenants and over 20 percent of all farmers in that area. Croppers are concentrated on the rich bottom lands of eastern Arkansas and western Mississippi, where cotton plantations predominate. ^{30/} Particularly in these plantation areas, and in other areas of the South, they are the most important source of labor in the production of cotton. Assuming three workers per sharecropper family—a conservative estimate—there were 1,611,000 worker-members in cropper families in the eight principal cotton-producing States, as compared with about 488,000 hired laborers. ^{31/}

The purpose of this section is not to present an account of all the problems of the Southern sharecroppers, but rather to show how similar is their position in agriculture to that of the agricultural wage laborers. Ordinarily the sharecropper is classed as a tenant, although, as Brannen states:

"From the standpoint of farm organization, whereby the land-owner contributes the capital and equipment, and the cultivator of the land contributes the labor, and the land owner retains a large measure of control of both the land and equipment and the labor, the relationship is virtually that of employer and employee rather than that of landlord and tenant." ^{32/}

In some States, as stated ^{33/} the cropper is designated in law as a wage laborer working for a share of the crop as wages. Study of the reasons for the rapid spread of sharecropping in the South after the Civil War bears out this view. ^{34/} In the hill areas of the South and in other areas not characterized by a plantation system, the sharecropper more nearly approaches the status of a tenant.

Of all the characteristics usually considered essential in a tenancy agreement, the cropper contract exhibits only one; namely, assumption of risk. Like other tenants—and like the owner himself,—the cropper takes a chance on the conjuncture of weather, soil and seed; unlike bona fide tenants, he has little or nothing to say about the selection of crops, the methods or time of cultivation or harvesting or

^{30/} For more detailed information on numbers and distribution of croppers in the South see Turner, H.A., A Graphic Summary of Farm Tenure, U.S.D.A. Misc. Publ. No. 261. Washington, D. C., December 1936.

^{31/} Since members of cropper families often hire out, some duplication exists between these two figures.

^{32/} Brannen, C.O., Relation of Land Tenure to Plantation Organization Fayetteville, Ark. 1928, p. 31.

^{33/} See page 22.

^{34/} Banks, Enoch Marvin, The Economics of Land Tenure in Georgia, Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law. Vol. XXIII, No. 1, Columbia University Press, New York, N.Y., 1905, p. 79

the markets in which the crop is to be sold. Usually he bears half of the cost of ginning, bagging, and ties and half of the cost of fertilizer, when commercial fertilizer is used on cotton crop on which he works. He receives, ordinarily, one-half of the returns from the sale of that crop. The same principles may extend to practices in crops other than cotton. But he is no entrepreneur; he does not manage, neither does he supply any appreciable capital. In no sense does his tenure status rest upon control of land or of the use to which land is put. He supplies labor power like other laborers, and in most other respects, save that of method of compensation, his position is like theirs. His field work is closely supervised by the farm manager or riding boss; his teams and tools are supplied. (His employer-employee relationships as they affect farm labor in general are discussed in Part Three.)

From the point of view of the plantation manager, the advantage of keeping the cropper in tenant status lies in the assurance thus given that the cropper and his family can be depended on to remain on the plantation through the harvest season, with its heavy demand for hand labor. There is the further advantage that losses resulting from a bad crop year or low prices will be shared by the cropper who, in effect, subsidizes the owner by reducing his own already low standard of living. For the cropper the advantage lies in the assurance of support, through the furnish system, from early in the year until the harvest season when the landlord often turns over part of the cash from cotton seed sales, in lieu of advances.

For both owners and croppers correlative disadvantages exist. On the one hand the plantation owner sees himself under the necessity of supporting labor at times when it is not actually being used, and on the other, the cropper sees himself and his family bound to the plantation by ties which prevent them from taking advantage of opportunities elsewhere. 35/

Economically, as in the matter of function, there is little to choose as between cropper and wage hand. The wage hand on the Southern plantation is not, like the strictly seasonal hands, a mere laborer by the day. Often resident on the plantation the year round, he has a house and certain perquisites. Often, indeed, although still regarded as a wage hand, he works a small patch of cotton and thus blurs still further the distinction between himself and the cropper. Everywhere one finds such gradations of status, from wage hand to renter, as well as a constant shifting of individuals, from year to year, from cropper status to that of wage hand and back again.

35/ Goldenweizer, E. A., and Truesdell, Leon F., Farm Tenancy in the United States, Census Monograph IV, Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce, Washington, D. C., 1924, p. 15.

There are similarities between the problems of the cropper and those of the plantation wage hand. First among such similarities is the difficulty both have of earning enough to maintain even a subsistence standard of living. Second is instability of tenure and of employment. Third is the trend toward loss of income due to deterioration of tenure status through reduction of the cotton acreage per cropper. Fourth is the danger of complete displacement, as a result of the increased use of tractors and large-scale equipment. All these factors contribute to the economic insecurity of the cropper and render his position little more to be desired than that of the wage hand.

Also to be considered are the unsatisfactory conditions on the job and the lack of any advantage between cropper and wage hand in this respect. Such considerations support the view that, in considering the South, to exclude the cropper would rob a study of agricultural labor of most of its value.

2. Incomes of Croppers and Wage Hands

Data regarding sharecropper and wage laborer incomes indicate that the cropper enjoys little income advantage over the wage laborer, particularly when the figures are adjusted for differences in the numbers of workers in the average families of croppers and laborers. Table 14 indicates that in a number of studies neither among sharecroppers nor among wage hands did the annual net cash earnings ordinarily exceed \$100 per worker; and even when goods for home use and perquisites were figured in, the total seldom exceeded \$150 in either group. The slightly higher income per cropper worker is almost wholly accounted for by the difference in the value of goods produced for home use. The cropper, because of his year's tenure, is better able than the wage hand to work a garden, keep a cow, a pig, or some chickens. Per family, the difference in income between cropper and wage hand is greater because of the larger size of the average cropper family.

The standards of living maintained at such income levels were described in the Report of the President's Committee on Farm Tenancy as "below any level of decency." ^{36/} Rupert B. Vance recently further portrayed the unsatisfactory living standard of this low income group. ^{37/} Tenants' housing is described as the poorest in the nation, their customary clothing as inadequate,

^{36/} Farm Tenancy, op. cit. p. 7.

^{37/} Vance, Rupert B, Farmers Without Land, Public Affairs Pamphlets No. 12, Public Affairs Committee, New York, N.Y., 1937, pp. 19-20.

Table 14. - Adjusted sharecropper and wage laborer net income in specified areas, 1932-37 ^{1/}

Class of worker, year, and area	:Total	:	:	:	:	:	:
	:net	:	:	:	:	:	:
	:family	:	:Percent	:	:	:	:
	:income	:	:which home:	:	:	:	:
	:inc.	:	:use and	:	:	:	:
	:home	:Net	:perquisites	:Net income:	:Net income	:	:
	:use and:	:cash	:are of	:per person:	:per worker	:	:
	:perqui-	:family:	:total net	:Total:	:Net	:Total:	:Net
	:sites	:income:	:income	:net	:cash	:net	:cash
<u>Sharecropper</u>	:Dollars:	:Dollars	: Percent	:Dollars	:Dollars	:Dollars	:Dollars
1932	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Yazoo-Mississippi Delta	: 252	: 119	: 52.8	: 66	: 31	: 87	: 41
1933	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Yazoo-Mississippi Delta	: 334	: 202	: 39.5	: 95	: 58	: 119	: 72
1934	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Yazoo-Mississippi Delta	: 381	: 243	: 36.2	: 109	: 69	: 136	: 87
Arkansas: Red, Arkansas and	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Mississippi River Basins	: 334	: 217	: 35.0	: 88	: 57	: 159	: 103
Atlantic Coast Plain	: 569	: 355	: 37.6	: 96	: 60	: 167	: 104
Upper Piedmont	: 386	: 204	: 47.2	: 74	: 39	: 133	: 70
Black Belt	: 360	: 207	: 42.5	: 69	: 40	: 124	: 71
Upper Delta	: 373	: 230	: 38.3	: 96	: 59	: 170	: 105
Lower Delta	: 204	: 98	: 52.0	: 49	: 23	: 85	: 41
1935	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Yazoo-Mississippi Delta	: 424	: 261	: 38.4	: 118	: 73	: 146	: 90
Mississippi Delta	: 492	: 303	: 38.4	: 114	: 70	: 141	: 87
Georgia Piedmont	: 518	: 187	: 63.9	: 93	: 33	: 133	: 48
South Carolina-Coast Plain	: 570	: 312	: 45.3	: 104	: 57	: 150	: 82
1936	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Yazoo-Mississippi Delta	: 530	: 367	: 30.8	: 156	: 108	: 196	: 136
Mississippi-Black Belt	: 310	: 204	: 34.0	: 82	: 54	: 107	: 70
Georgia-Lower Piedmont	: 401	: 162	: 60.0	: 73	: 39	: 106	: 43
Texas-Piney Woods Cotton	: 489	: 303	: 38.0	: 109	: 67	: 245	: 152
1937	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Arkansas: Red, Arkansas and	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Mississippi Deltas	: 483	: 313	: 35.0	: 118	: 78	: 161	: 104
South Carolina Piedmont	: 561	: 349	: 38.0	: 95	: 59	: 140	: 87
South Carolina Plain	: 648	: 430	: 34.0	: 108	: 72	: 158	: 105
<u>Wage Laborer</u>	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
1934	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Arkansas: Red, Arkansas and	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Mississippi River Delta	: 243	: 168	: 30.9	: 87	: 60	: 128	: 88
Atlantic Coast Plain	: 239	: 164	: 31.4	: 70	: 48	: 109	: 75
Upper Piedmont	: 193	: 126	: 34.7	: 84	: 55	: 129	: 84
Black Belt	: 205	: 136	: 33.7	: 64	: 43	: 98	: 65
Upper Delta	: 242	: 166	: 31.4	: 97	: 66	: 151	: 104
Lower Delta	: 245	: 169	: 31.0	: 91	: 63	: 136	: 94
1937	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Arkansas: Red, Arkansas and	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Mississippi Deltas	: 405	: 292	: 27.9	: 109	: 79	: 156	: 112
South Carolina Piedmont	: 344	: 228	: 33.7	: 93	: 62	: 138	: 91
South Carolina Coast Plain	: 371	: 273	: 26.4	: 76	: 56	: 128	: 94

^{1/} Source: Holcomb, E. J, Income and Earnings of Farm Laborers, U.S.D.A., Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Washington, D. C., May 1940, Processed.

and their diet as being a frequent cause of pellagra. Gardens and livestock production for home use are frequently lacking; "rations" are mostly obtained on credit; money income is meager. Back-breaking household labor reflects the absence of household conveniences. Medical and health services are inadequate; patent medicines are the main resource in illness.

3. Causes of Low Income

Some of the causes of this low level of income apply both to croppers and wage hands; some are peculiar to one class or the other. Among the causes applicable to both are, first, the dependence upon the farm resources of the South of more persons than the land, as it is now used and managed, can support, and, second, the persistent reliance upon cotton as the one cash crop. Moreover, both cropper and wage hand are highly seasonal laborers; although the cropper may have a year's tenure, he seldom works more than 6 months in the year, while members of his family are even less fully employed. The cropper and the wage hand both suffer from insufficiency of paid employment.

In addition, both cropper and wage hand spend their lives at simple manual labor that is highly inefficient and unproductive. In some plantation areas it is not uncommon to see a sharecropper using the outmoded "double shovel" on his cotton patch, while in an adjoining field on the same plantation, a wage laborer drives a tractor pulling a four-row cultivator. The practice of using the tractor on sharecropper cotton is increasing but the sharecropper seldom benefits, since its use usually involves the deduction from his small prospective income of charges for the work performed.

Among the causes of low income that in recent years have caused especial concern to croppers, are (1) reduction in cotton acreage per cropper, (2) changes in rental arrangements, and (3) the "furnish" system.

In the past the size of the cropper family, which fixed the amount of labor available for cotton picking, was the chief factor in determining the size of the cropper tract. This varied from 15 to 25 acres, some part of which was usually in corn. Of recent years there has been a tendency to reduce the acreage per cropper family, and thus to diminish its annual income. In some areas, indeed, the cropper cotton has been reduced to a mere patch, thus creating a status different from that of the bona fide cropper, and yet not quite like that of the wage hand. Under this arrangement the labor of the cropper family is retained on the plantation, but is used, to an increasing extent, upon the wages-cotton crop of

the plantation rather than upon the cropper's own planting. This tendency toward reduction in the acreage of cotton per cropper has grown out of the general reduction in cotton acreage in the South under the AAA agricultural programs. It was necessary for each plantation operator to decide whether the reduction in his total acreage should be made in the cotton worked with wage hands or in that worked with tenants and croppers. If the choice fell against the latter, it was a matter of getting rid of some of the croppers altogether or of reducing the acreage per cropper.

During recent years there has appeared in some areas a tendency to modify the customary rental arrangements by reducing the cropper's share of the crop, say, from 50 to 40 percent, or by making new charges upon him for the performance of services either not rendered before or performed free of charge. One of the new charges is that for tractor work performed on the cropper's acreage; data from three Arkansas delta counties reveal that from 25 to 40 percent of the croppers on plantations using tractors, have to pay such charges.

Since croppers receive a part of their supplies, their so-called "furnish", direct from the landlord or his agent, or secure credit from the plantation store or commissary, or from a local merchant on the landlord's endorsement, cropper income may be materially affected by the prices charged for food and supplies and by the terms on which credit is secured. In this respect the wage hand sometimes is in the same position as the cropper, being under some compulsion to trade at the plantation store. The rate of profit on goods sold to plantation labor varies widely. Goods may be sold at current retail cash prices and 10 percent may be added to the account as interest at the end of the year, or goods may be sold at credit prices, which exceed cash prices.

A study of 112 croppers in North Carolina in 1928 showed that furnish advances, mostly in cash, amounted to over 63 percent of the cropper's cash farm income, while the interest paid on those advances amounted to more than 10 percent of the total cash income. ^{38/}

It is this system, together with the dependence of the cropper upon the landlord for the keeping of accounts, that has fastened debt so inexorably upon the cropper class. Hoffsommer's study of 1,022 relief households in December 1933 indicated that, for approximately one-half of the years spent at sharecropping by all relief households reporting, the economic outcome was "broke even." Roughly, 20 percent of the years showed a profit on the growing of cotton

^{38/} Vance, Rupert B. op. cit. p. 17.

and 30 percent, a loss. More than one-third of the tenants were indebted to their landlords. ^{39/}

4. Instability of Tenure

It is often asserted that, despite the low income of the cropper, there is a certain permanency about his position as a tenant which the wage laborer lacks. Undoubtedly there is some truth in this view. Once the year-end negotiations are over and the cropper is settled on a plantation with his family, he has a certain amount of security as regards the coming year. However, the regular wage hand, resident on the plantation, differs from him only slightly in this degree. Both these groups enjoy a decided advantage over the non-resident seasonal wage hand.

Unfortunately, this comparative stability does not extend in satisfactory degree from one year to another. The extent to which croppers move has indeed become notorious. In his study, "The Relation of Land Tenure to Plantation Organization" Brannen states that, of all the croppers in selected counties in 1920, more than half had been less than 2 years on the farms they then occupied. ^{40/} According to a comprehensive study in 1924 of the mobility of Oklahoma farmers, from one-half to three-fourths of all croppers in most of the cotton areas of the State were new to the farms they were operating that year; and the average period of cropper residence on a farm was about a year and a half. In seven of the crop-reporting districts of the State, between two-thirds to three-fourths of all croppers were for the first time operating the farms they were on. The direct cost of such a volume of movement was estimated to be about two million dollars a year, at least half of which was of no economic or social benefit to the farmer who moves, to the owner of the land, or to the State. Useless moving was estimated to have cost the farmers interviewed, in direct cost only, ^{41/} an equivalent of 5.4 percent of their per capita net wealth. ^{41/}

Records secured in Arkansas in 1938 showed that wage laborers and sharecroppers alike were highly mobile. ^{42/}

^{39/} Hoffsommer, Harold. Landlord-Tenant Relations and Relief in Alabama, United States, Federal Emergency Relief Administration, Division of Research Statistics and Finance, Research Section, Research Bulletin, Series II, No. 9, Washington, D. C., Nov. 14, 1935.

^{40/} Brannen, op. cit. p. 46

^{41/} Sanders, J. T. Economic and Social Aspects of Mobility of Oklahoma Farmers, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, Agricultural Experiment Station. Bulletin 195, Stillwater, August 1929. p. 3

^{42/} Barton, Glen F. and McNeely, J. G. Recent Changes in Farm Labor Organization in Three Arkansas Plantation Counties, Arkansas University, College of Agriculture, Agricultural Experiment Station. Preliminary Report, Fayetteville, Sept. 1939, Processed, p. 41.

Two-fifths of all farm occupancies lasted one year only, while nearly three-fifths (59 percent) of the occupancies did not exceed 2 years. Moves were usually for short distances. Over one-third of the farm-to-farm moves of the Arkansas families were over distances of less than 3 miles; while 62 percent of the moves did not involve distances greater than 8 miles.

Such frequent moving, even for short distances, has a direct effect on the economic and social status of the families. Aside from the direct cost, pulling up roots may involve a change of schools for the children and the breaking of church and community associations. Farm and home improvements, moreover, are not to be expected from such transient tenants, other than those which can be fully utilized within the period of a year.

5. Deterioration of Tenure Status

The parallel between the cropper and the wage hand has recently been increased by a new danger already referred to: though the form of cropper status is retained, the economic reality of that status, limited as it is, may gradually deteriorate until the small advantage which the cropper at one time possessed over the wage hand disappears entirely. Under such circumstances, indeed, the cropper finds himself no better off than the wage hand as regards income and yet, because of his share relationship, is deprived of the wage hand's freedom of movement. This process appears to be taking place on a considerable scale. The chief indication is the decline in the acreage of cotton per cropper family.

Further destruction of the distinction between the cropper and the wage laborer is involved in the practice not uncommon on many plantations, of working croppers "through and through." Under this system the croppers jointly work on the combined acreage of all cropper cotton tracts under the operator's supervision. In many instances no indication of the identity of the individual cropper patches is given until the crop is ready for chopping. The "through and through" system is particularly suited to plantations on which tractors and multiple-row equipment are used extensively. Often a "through and through" system is also followed at picking time when croppers work as a gang in picking the cotton of the entire plantation, receive wages for so doing, and in turn are charged for the cost of cotton picking on their individual tracts.

This breakdown of the old distinction, even in the matter of cotton acreages, between sharecropper and wage hand is undoubtedly due in part to the progress of mechanization, and in part to the reduction in cotton acreage in recent years.

6. Displacement

Voluntary movement of croppers, as of tenants generally, has long been a characteristic feature of the Cotton Belt. Dissatisfaction with low income, desire to escape from a load of debt carried over from year to year, the hope of self-betterment, mere restlessness, custom, and habit, all play a part in what is generally recognized as a wasteful reshuffling of the personnel of cotton production. Ordinarily, the cropper has little incentive to remain in one place. He has little livestock and no machinery; his household belongings are few; under the one-crop system, he has no interest in long-time plans.

Of late, however, the threat of complete displacement has increased the economic insecurity of the cropper, and emphasized the vagueness of the line separating him from the wage hand. Reduction of cotton acreage, increased use of mechanical equipment, the consolidation of farms and the desire on the part of planters to work the cotton crop with wage hands, have created conditions conducive to such a development.

A survey of 221 farms in three Bottom Land counties of Arkansas (Mississippi, Chicot, and Pulaski) showed that a definite shift from sharecropper and share tenant labor took place between 1932 and 1938. In 1938 the number of share workers had decreased by 13.7 percent from that of 1932, while the number of wage families had increased by 44.3 percent. However, the net decrease in the number of households, including single hands, amounted to only 0.6 percent. During the period under consideration, the cropland in the 221 farms increased by 8,653 acres, due largely to land clearing operations. Accordingly, in order to hold the land factor constant, calculations were made on the basis of the number of families in each tenure class per 10,000 acres of cropland. On this basis there had been a decline of 27 percent in the number of sharecroppers and share renters, and an increase of 19 percent in the number of wage families. The displacement, computed on this basis, was 16 percent. Most of the changes from share labor to wage labor occurred on mechanized farms. On 121 farms surveyed in three counties in the Upland area of Arkansas (Clark, Pope and Independence), there had been between 1932 and 1938 a decrease of 14 percent in the number of share renters and of 12½ percent in the number of sharecroppers; but, in contrast to the Bottom Land area, no increase in the number of wage families. The net reduction in the number of households, including single wage hands was 12½ percent. Calculated in relation to 10,000 acres of cropland, the decline amounted to 15½ percent in the case of share renters, and 20 percent in the case of sharecroppers, while the decrease in the total number of households, including single wage hands, amounted to 16 percent. ^{43/}

^{43/} McNeely, J. G. and Barton, Glen T. Land Tenure in Arkansas: II Change in Labor Organization on Cotton Farms, Arkansas University. College of Agriculture, Agricultural Experiment Station. Bulletin 397, Fayetteville, June 1940.

Expanding economic activity and employment opportunities accompanying the present war will undoubtedly provide alternative employment for some displaced sharecroppers and laborers. The social and economic aspects of labor displacement in the South will thus be different in the immediate future from those in prospect until just recently. However, farm organization adaptations to a decreased labor supply during the war may result in serious economic and social problems in the period of post-war adjustment.

The unsatisfactory character of the job status of the sharecropper, in which he is with difficulty to be distinguished from the wage hand, arises from the completeness of supervision to which his work is subjected, the lack, despite a share in the crop risks, of any share in decisions or control, the loss in some areas of any identity of interest in that part of the acreage which is formally allotted to him, and his complete dependence upon the operator for animals and tools.

The engaging of croppers as family units involves severe restrictions upon the family members. Indebtedness to the landlord, so common as to be a pattern of relationship, increases the sense of dependence.

Few deny that one of the most serious faults in plantation organization is the inefficiency of the low grade of labor employed, the lack of incentive to self-betterment and the consequent inertia and indifference. But it cannot be denied either that when opportunity to rise is present, as on tractor jobs calling for skill and resourcefulness, among the young at least inertia vanishes and a ready response to opportunity is apparent. The lack of any security in tenure, and the indeterminate legal position of the sharecropper, discourage him from improving his land or buildings since such improvements might merely be gifts to his landlord. Thus he wastes his free time in less productive activities and the land goes uncared for and the buildings unrepaired. The unsatisfactory working conditions of the cropper thus contribute to the basic land-use problems of the South, draining off natural resources, and causing failure to return fertility to the land by the growing of cover crops and the raising of livestock.

7. Racial Characteristics

The racial factor perpetuates and intensifies the disadvantages to which the majority of sharecroppers are subject. Sharecropping is peculiarly the lot of the Negro on the land in important areas of the South. In the United States the ratio of tenancy as a whole is much lower among white farm operators than among operators classified as non-white (which is virtually synonymous with Negro in the South)?

In this group, 74.5 percent of the non-white farm operators, as against 40.5 percent of the white operators, were classified as tenants in the census returns for 1940. 44/

Non-whites represented a scant 23 percent of all farm operators in the South in 1940, but more than 55 percent of the cropper operators in that area. Considering cropping as a category of farm tenure rather than as a category of farm labor, Negro farm operators in the South are roughly $4\frac{1}{2}$ times as likely as are white operators to be found in the status of croppers. At the present time, apparently, the absolute number of non-white croppers is greater than that of white croppers (299,118 against 242,173 according to the 1940 census figures). Croppers constitute some 18 percent of all the farm operators in the South (541,291 out of 3,007,170), but Negro croppers account for 44 percent of all Negro operators, according to the 1940 census figures; whereas white croppers account for scarcely more than 10 percent of all white operators.

During the decade preceding the last Census, the proportional decrease in the numbers of croppers was definitely more rapid among white than among Negroes in the South. The total number of croppers as a whole declined by some 30 percent between 1930 and 1940, but within that total the number of whites fell 37 percent while the number of non-whites fell 24 percent. Apparently the forces that forced croppers into economic positions less desirable, or in some cases permitted them to rise into positions more desirable, than cropping, were less operative among the non-white than the white groups.

Community and social handicaps to which Negroes are subject generally throughout the South combine to keep them cropping to a greater extent than in the case of white croppers. The Negro is likely to be at a greater disadvantage than the white cropper in any dispute that may arise with his landlord. Attitudes, dating back to the days when chattel slavery was a legal institution, underly the handicaps to which the Negro cropper is subject in addition to the usual cropper handicaps of extreme poverty, bad housing, inadequate education, etc.

44/ U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.
a. Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930. Agriculture
Vol. II, Part 2. Southern States. Table 9.
b. Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940. Agriculture
U. S. Summary. First Series. Table VI (Supplemental for
the Southern States).

The problem of the sharecropper cannot be separated into the problems of the white sharecropper on the one hand as opposed to the problems of the Negro sharecropper on the other. Rather, the general sharecropper problem exists in peculiarly intensified and aggravated form among the sharecropper majority who are Negro.

E. THE HIRED MAN:

In the last week of March 1940, according to the Census, there were 739,000 laborers working on farms who were hired by the month. How many of these were "hired men", in the old sense of the word, there is no way of knowing; in the Corn Belt and Dairy areas they probably constituted a considerable proportion. Even in these districts, however, their numbers were diminishing.

In the past and until recent years the hired man was regarded as one of the most permanent and typical figures on the American farm. He was characteristic of farm life in the nineteenth century while family farming still predominated and half or more of the country's gainful workers were engaged in agriculture.

The hired man was frequently the son of a nearby farmer; as such he was the social and intellectual equal of the members of his employer's family. If not so well vouched for, he could by industry, ability, and character soon establish his own reputation and place in farm circles. He was readily accepted as a member of the farm group. In the East he was usually an unmarried man. He ate at his employer's table, lodged under the same roof, and shared the plans, work, joys, and sorrows of the household. He worked for wages, usually by the month. By saving he often acquired a farm of his own in the locality. Off his employer's farm, the hired man was a member of a closely knit community, free to attend church, socials, ball games, or carnivals.

The best of the hired men were almost professionals. Such men had judgment and initiative. They understood the handling and care of livestock. They could be trusted to carry on farm work intelligently, without constant supervision. They did not receive high money wages, but they did not have heavy expenses. They could easily save much of their income. Opportunity to climb the agricultural ladder was fostered by the cheapness of farm land, low cost of equipment, and the possibility of going West to homestead on cheap public lands.

West of the Hudson the hired man was often a family man. Accordingly, he was often given a dwelling. He frequently received, in addition to his money wages and dwelling, such perquisites as milk, eggs, fuel, flour or meal, meat at slaughtering time, vegetables and fruit in season, use of a horse, and other privileges. Sometimes he was allowed pasturage and feed for his own cow instead of milk; or land for garden and use of work stock and tools with which to work it instead of vegetables. Practices were apt to be uniform locally, but they varied regionally. The allowance of corn meal was characteristically Southern; of flour, Northern and Western.

Of shortcomings in the life of the hired man, there were many. A farm hand's wage rates were low, for part of the pay was practice in the business of running a farm. Often the wages were lower in winter than in summer. Sometimes in winter there was actual unemployment. Savings accumulated slowly. As the years passed, it took longer to begin farming by one's self; the agricultural ladder became harder to climb.

Often perquisites were not so good nor so generous as the hired man thought reasonable. Foods served at table were often the subject of complaint as to cooking or variety, and room and bed as to comfort. The married man's house might be small for his family, inconvenient for his wife's work, and in poor repair. He might need more than the quart of milk his employer allowed. The meat might be restricted to the poorest cuts. Vegetables and fruit might be decidedly limited in variety, quantity, and quality, particularly in winter. The hired man might have to fit his own stove wood, or even cut it from the timber. The garden space might be too small, and the man and his wife might have to work it on their own time; in addition, the employer might refuse use of work stock or equipment to work the garden, or to leave the farm on business or pleasure.

Many hired men disliked the frequent necessity of working alone. Working conditions, due to heat, dust, cold, rain, and long days, were often disagreeable. Opportunities to leave the farm for diversion and recreation were limited.

Too frequently, personal relations between the farm operator and the hired man were not of the best. Personal misunderstandings and irritations were easily magnified. The employer might not take the man into his confidence and talk over plans and difficulties; he might criticize shortcomings, and fail to compliment good work.

The hired man might not be taken into the farm family as he expected. There was also the possibility that the farmer might forget that he also was ^{once} a young man getting a similar start in life, and might look down upon his hired man as an inferior. In ^{more} recent years many farmers came to speak of all hired men as shiftless incompetents. This was a sign of the break-down of the system.

The old-time hired man is vanishing because developments in this century have changed the conditions of farm life and affected the possibilities of his advancement. Opportunities for hired men to become farmers have declined, as public land was occupied, and as other land and farming equipment became more costly. Native-born farmers' sons have been attracted away from the farm to nonagricultural work, and to town life, --and strangers (many of them aliens) have taken their places. Mechanization, often leading to consolidation of farms, has reduced opportunities for year-round employment. And where large-scale, semi-industrialized agriculture has become the dominant type of farming the old relationship between operator and workers has disappeared.

F. MIGRATORY AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

1. Growth of the Agricultural Migratory Labor Force

One of the most far reaching and significant changes in the farm labor force over the last few decades has been the growth in the number of migrant agricultural workers. (Effects of the war may disrupt this trend temporarily or permanently). With this increase in the size of the migrant group has come the creation of new problems for the farm labor force. Also the old handicaps of low income and insecurity which faced the farm laborers have become intensified.

The migratory portion of the agricultural labor supply is composed of those workers who follow from place to place seasonal cycles of agricultural work. In addition, there are workers who engage partly in non-agricultural pursuits and partly in seasonal farm work. Temporary migrants in transition to a new place or type of employment are also part of this group. Agricultural migrant laborers travel as family groups, as single individuals, or in gangs.

2. Areas of Demand

The areas of demand for seasonal migrant workers are found mainly where production is specialized and organized on a commercial basis. The increased application of machine techniques and the growth of commercial farming have combined to alter the requirements for wage labor in agriculture. There is an ever-growing need for a large mobile reserve of short-time seasonal workers in the harvesting of many crops. The use of migratory workers in connection with cotton is a byproduct of the development of large-scale farming units in the Southwest and Far West, the existence of terrain suited to the use of tractors, and the absence of thickly populated sections from which to draw the necessary seasonal labor.

In some areas of the old South, as in southeastern Missouri and parts of the Delta, where large mechanized units have developed, non-resident seasonal workers also have been required. Migrants have long been necessary in certain fruit and truck-crop areas which lack an adequate resident labor force. For cotton and for small fruits and vegetables, the hand labor requirements are exceptionally high during harvesting.

The sugar beet areas of the North and West have traditionally depended upon migrant labor to perform cultivating as well as harvesting operations. Sugar beets demand as much hand labor during cultivation as they do during harvesting, and probably have the greatest hand labor requirements of any crop.

The wheat areas of the Midwest also use migrant labor for harvesting. The trend here, however, has been the reverse of that found in the other crop ^{areas} enumerated. During the first quarter of this century the movement of unattached single men into the wheat belt of the Great Plains area was one of the country's outstanding migratory phenomena. The extended use of the small combine-harvester has reduced the amount of seasonal labor required and the adaptability of "exchange" labor has further curtailed the use of seasonally hired labor. Although the numerical significance of this movement has declined, it is still of importance, particularly in North Dakota.

Certain specialty crops, such as hops on the Pacific Coast, shade-grown tobacco in Connecticut, cranberries in New Jersey and Massachusetts, and peanuts in Virginia and North Carolina, have large seasonal labor demands for non-local workers.

3. Sources of Supply

The stream of migratory agricultural workers is fed from many sources. First, there is the large body of regular seasonal migrants who follow the crops, year in and year out. Moving in and out of the main body are the removal migrants, transient refugees from drought, the tractor and curtailed farming and employment opportunities. These farm workers may be displaced farm owners, tenants, and croppers on their way to permanent settlement. Lack of opportunity, of course, has resulted in many of these entering the stream of habitual migrants. Year-round hired laborers join the ranks of transient farm workers when they are pushed out of regular employment. Unemployed industrial workers, and many who are laid off seasonally, frequently seek agricultural employment. Underemployed sharecroppers, tenant farmers, or farmers, and members of their families, often work in nearby farm areas to supplement their cash incomes. High school and college students on vacation, and children who migrate to agricultural areas with their parents, are sources of seasonal labor on the farm.

4. Types of Movement

Although there are certain definite patterns of movement in the flow of seasonal workers from area to area or from crop to crop, the routes of individual workers are frequently varied. Thus, some migrants work on only one crop and follow it from area to area as it matures and becomes ready for harvesting. Others work on several crops, following a route that takes them from State to State. Still other migrants harvest a diversity of crops in the same geographical area; here the mobility is confined to moving about in this area, although the migration to the area may have been of considerable distance. Still others move long distances for a comparatively lengthy period of employment in a single crop, as, for example, the movement of Mexican workers from Texas to the sugar beet fields of Michigan. Some seasonal laborers simply migrate to areas near their homes for a short period of work.

5. Number and Characteristics

Seasonal agricultural laborers include women and children as well as men. The employment of women and children arises out of the fact that the habitual migrant of today is frequently a married man. His family must move about with him. Even occasional migrants, those who work at agricultural pursuits only part of the year, frequently travel with their families. In the case of the removal migrants, those who are migrating in the hope of finding a new home, families usually move together because of inability to subsist apart, and because of the necessity of utilizing the labor of all members of the family.

The number of migrants in the various classes described above is unknown. Both the need for seasonal workers and the actual migration are subject to wide fluctuations. The difficulties in making an over-all estimate of the number of agricultural migrants in the United States are manifold. The Tolan Committee, which is studying migration in all its aspects, has not attempted to make such an estimate. "Although monthly data showing the numbers of hired farm workers are available it is not known how many of these are permanently hired and how many are seasonally employed." ^{45/} Moreover, it should be noted that not all the workers available for seasonal employment are migratory--there are many local non-migrant laborers who find work at those occupations which hire great numbers of migrants.

It has been estimated on the basis of census figures that between 1 and 2 million workers are needed seasonally in agriculture besides those hired the year round. This figure is, of course, subject to qualifications.

In 1937, Paul S. Taylor hazarded a preliminary estimate that there were from 200,000 to 350,000 regular agricultural migrants in the United States. ^{46/} No estimate has been made since that time. Counting the workers who enter the migratory farm labor market temporarily is also a difficult task, and not even a guess has been made as to their numbers.

^{45/} U. S. Congress, House of Representatives, Select Committee to Investigate the Migration of Destitute Citizens, 77th Congress, First Session, House Report 369, Washington, D. C., 1941, p.337 (Hereinafter referred to as the Tolan Committee).

^{46/} Taylor, Paul S., "Migratory Farm Labor in the United States", Monthly Labor Review, U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, March 1937.

It should be noted that Taylor's estimate includes packing-shed workers and their families as well as field workers and their families.

The extensive fluctuations in both demand for and supply of migrant farm laborers are best understood by a few illustrations. Thus, the movement of 20,000 workers into the Arkansas berry fields in 1934 was followed by almost complete absence of migrants in 1935 due to the poor crop. On the other hand, cotton acreage in the San Joaquin Valley of California, after more than doubling between 1935 and 1937, declined by about 40 percent under the cotton program of 1938, without any visible decline of migration into the area.

A report of the Secretary of Labor estimated that between 1930 and 1937 more than 200,000 persons emigrated from the Great Plains region, of whom more than 100,000 went to California, perhaps 60,000 to the Pacific Northwest, and about 12,000 to Eastern Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan. ^{47/} A comprehensive study of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics ^{48/} indicates that the net migration into California during the 1930's totaled more than 1,100,000 persons. The three States of the Pacific Northwest experienced a net in-migration of 260,000 individuals during this decade. The net in-migration into Arizona during this same period totaled 31,000 persons.

These westward migrations were not predominantly agricultural in origin nor exclusively from the drought areas. "Less than one-fourth of all families enumerated in the migration survey in California had been engaged in agriculture either as farmers or farm laborers prior to migration. Pupils from one-third of the families enumerated in the Pacific Northwest and in Arizona indicated that their fathers had been engaged in agriculture either as farmers or farm laborers before migrating." ^{49/} The male heads of the families migrating to California were classified by occupational status before and after migration to that State. There was a large decrease in the number of farmers and a large increase in the number of farm laborers. These trends bear out the observation already made that many removal migrants do not again settle on the land, but are pushed down into the status of wage laborers.

^{47/} Migration of Workers, Preliminary Report of the Secretary of Labor pursuant to Senate Resolution 298 (74th Congress) Washington, 1938, Vol. 1, pp. 60, 62.

^{48/} Janow, Seymour J., Volume and Characteristics of Recent Migration to the Far West, U. S. Bureau of Agricultural Economics, and Farm Security Administration, Region XI, Department of Agriculture, printed in Tolan Committee Hearings, Part 6, San Francisco, pp. 2269-2326.

^{49/} Ibid., p. 2276.

The difficulties of the removal migrants, after they have left their places of origin and have taken to the road, arise from two primary sources--first, the lack of opportunities for re-location; and second, the effect of their entry into an already overcrowded migratory labor market. In terms of the history of previous movements to the far West, the number of families that have moved to the Pacific Coast in recent years from the Great Plains area and other places of origin is not impressive. It is only when we take into account the lack of free or low-cost lands and of employment opportunities in industry within the areas to which these people have gone that we are able to appreciate the demoralizing effect upon them of being transferred so swiftly from a settled status upon the land to one of complete dependence upon a shifting and overcrowded labor market. Their presence aggravates already existing problems of health, housing, relief, low incomes, and lack of organization among the migratory farm labor group. Removal migrants thus create a set of problems peculiar to themselves. At the same time, as migratory laborers, they must fit into established patterns of movement within and between the crop areas. So doing, they create problems for those who regularly "follow the crops."

6. The Main Streams of Migration

a. The Atlantic Seaboard

Extensive seasonal labor movements take place in Florida, especially in truck and cane-sugar areas around Lake Okeechobee, in truck areas on the eastern shore, in scattered spots on the Gulf Coast, and in the Ridgeland citrus and truck area running southwest to northeast across the center of the State. The demand for seasonal labor is greatest in the truck and fruit areas where winter and early spring vegetables of many kinds--string and lima beans, celery, tomatoes, peas, cabbage, radishes--as well as citrus fruits and strawberries, are grown in commercial volume. It is estimated that from 10,000 to 12,000 workers are used seasonally in the Ridgeland citrus and vegetable area; many of these are recruited from local residents. The greatest concentration of migratory seasonal workers is in the truck-garden and sugar-cane areas around Lake Okeechobee and in the truck areas on the southeast shore of the State. A large majority of migrants in Florida are Negroes, engaged primarily in field work. The white migrants are employed principally in packing houses. In the southeastern part of Florida, where some 50,000 seasonal workers are employed, about three-quarters of the labor force are migrants; likewise in the Florida citrus industry.

The neighboring States of Alabama and Georgia provide most of the Florida agricultural migrants, the rest coming from Mississippi, Louisiana, North and South Carolina, and as far west as California. Although many of these laborers follow crops the year round, some are tenants and sharecroppers who come to Florida during the winter months.

The migratory agricultural workers generally work in several different places in the State before leaving it; most of them specialize in certain crops. Potato workers harvest the crop in Dade County between December 20 and April 30. During this period they move into Palm Beach County and up the State to St. John, Putnam, and Alachua Counties. They then leave the State and move up the eastern seaboard into North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey; some go on to Long Island, some even to Maine. At the end of the season these workers gradually sift back down the eastern seaboard into Dade County to begin their cycle of potato work over again. Strawberry pickers work from December 1 to May 15 in four counties of the State, ending up in Bradford County. From there they leave Florida and move into Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, and the west coast. Some even go to the State of Washington and to British Columbia. Most return to Florida by the same route; a few take a northern route through the Midwestern States. Another group of the berry pickers migrate to Michigan and Ohio to pick berries and fruits.

Agriculture in the States immediately to the north of Florida-- Georgia and Alabama--offers little opportunity to the migratory laborer aside from the Georgia peach crop and the asparagus beds of the Georgia and South Carolina Coastal Plains. In the truck and berry farming section of southeastern North Carolina, however, the demand for seasonal agricultural workers is marked. From 15,000 to 20,000 workers, many of whom are Negroes, are employed there.

From this area, migrant workers move north into the potato fields of the North Carolina Coastal Plains and the lower Virginia Peninsula, where from 10,000 to 15,000 workers are employed in May and June. A migratory stream then moves via the east shore of Virginia into Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and New York.

Perhaps the greatest demand for workers in this northern movement is in New Jersey. Beginning in the latter part of April, asparagus, potatoes, strawberries, beans, and peas in Southern New Jersey require between 2,000 and 3,000 non-resident workers, as compared with some 6,000 during July and August. These non-local workers are composed mainly of white families from the Philadelphia, Camden, and Trenton areas. In September and October some 2,000 to 3,000 are needed in the cranberry bogs. In the central potato region, at least 4,000 migratory laborers are used from July to October in harvesting the potato crop. These are chiefly unattached Negro men.

b. Mississippi Valley

As an alternative to the route up the Atlantic Seaboard, some workers, after the close of harvesting activities in the fruit and truck crops in Florida, proceed along the Gulf to the Hammond strawberry area in Louisiana and thence up the Mississippi Valley. In the northward migration along the Mississippi River Negroes from the Southeast are joined by workers from the Southwest. The latter are used primarily in the strawberry, tomato, and truck areas of White, Benton, and Washington Counties, Arkansas. ^{50/} Cotton chopping and cotton picking in the Mississippi Valley, as well as the fruit and berry harvests in western Kentucky and Tennessee, provide employment for migrant Negroes. About 30,000 migrants are used in the Mississippi Valley berry and truck regions. ^{51/} Western Tennessee and Kentucky are not only points to which workers migrate, but are sources of farm laborers who move seasonally into other agricultural areas. Migrants from this region join those from Texas and the Southwest, after the berry and truck harvests in the Missouri-Kentucky-Tennessee triangle, in a further northward movement to the fruit and truck harvests in Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan.

There are other migration patterns such as those to and from the vegetable areas in Western New York. However, these are of relatively minor importance, on the basis of the number of migrant workers involved, when contrasted with the two major movements along the Atlantic Seaboard and Mississippi Valley.

c. Sugar beet migrations

The movement of workers in sugar beets usually is confined to a journey from the point of origin to the area of work and back again. This is in contrast to the fruit, truck, and berry migrations which afford employment to migratory workers moving through successive crops and areas.

Labor for use in the sugar beet fields is frequently recruited by the sugar beet factories, which exercise close control over the care of the crop and the manner of its working. California, Colorado, and Michigan are the principal sugar beet producing States, but this crop is also important in restricted areas in Utah, Nebraska, Oregon, Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Ohio, Minnesota, Wisconsin, South Dakota, North Dakota, Iowa, Kansas, Indiana, Washington, and Illinois.

^{50/} Arkansas Emergency Relief Administration, Transient Labor in the Berry Fields. Little Rock, 1934.

^{51/} Tolan Committee, op. cit., Final Report, page 338.

In California the labor contractor is used to recruit the necessary labor. To a lesser degree this is true also of Montana and Idaho. In the remaining States the workers are recruited through the sugar companies or beet growers' associations or are locally available.

The contract work in sugar beet growing is done principally by Spanish-speaking peoples of American or Mexican birth from California, New Mexico, Texas, and Colorado.

It has been estimated by the Sugar Division of the AAA that about 50,000 interstate and intrastate migrant workers were employed in the sugar beet areas in 1939. This comprised 53 percent of the contract labor force of the industry.

d. Wheat Belt migrations

During the first quarter of this century the movement of unattached single men into the wheat belt of the Great Plains area was one of the country's outstanding migratory phenomena. The bulk of the out-of-state laborers poured in from states to the east. There were thousands of them. The harvest began in Texas in June, and, progressed North into Canada. Comparatively few harvest hands followed it from South to North, the majority worked in only one or two States. Successive waves of workers entered and left the harvest as it swept North. Today the numerical significance of this movement has declined and the migratory pattern has changed in many respects, but it is still important. The reduction in the numbers of outside workers required to harvest the wheat crop has been brought about by two major developments. The first is the extended use of the small combine, which has reduced materially the man labor requirements of the crop. The adaptability of exchange labor has also further curtailed the use of seasonally hired labor in the wheat harvest. Whereas formerly about 250,000 workers entered the stream of migrant wheat harvest hands, now only 50,000 men move about in search of this work. Most of these migrants who obtain work are employed in the spring wheat areas of North Dakota, which utilize about 25,000 migratory workers as harvest hands.

The largest group of out-of-state migrants in North Dakota in 1937 and in 1938 came from Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin. Most of the harvest hands migrated from States to the south and east of North Dakota, very few transients coming from the far western states. ^{52/} Most (about 85 percent) of these migratory harvesters were single, that is without family attachment. Very few family groups join the wheat belt migration, although some married men who leave their families at home are occasionally among these migrants.

^{52/} Data from study conducted in 1938. "Men and Machines in the North Dakota Harvest," by Robert M. Cullum, Josiah C. Folsom, and Donald G. Hay, Bureau of Agricultural Economics and Farm Security Administration, cooperating. Washington, D.C. April, 1942. Additional sponsors of the study were North Dakota and Kansas Agricultural Experiment Stations.

From North Dakota, some of the harvesters go to Minnesota, Canada, and Montana for work. The great majority, however, do not move to other States for the harvest after the work in North Dakota is completed. To some extent the harvesters have been moving into the potato fields of that State.

e. Cotton migration

In the old South the need for extra hands during the cotton chopping and picking seasons has been met through the use of the sharecropper system. In those areas of the old South where it has proved more profitable to adopt the methods of the West, as in Southeastern Missouri and in parts of the Delta, workers migrate to the cotton fields from surrounding urban centers. These laborers generally are displaced sharecroppers and tenants who congregate in the towns and cities of the South from whence they are drawn into the cotton fields as needed seasonally. It is in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California that the cotton migrant is the rule and not the exception.

The greatest cotton migration lies within the State of Texas. The migratory cycle begins in the truck and vegetable ^{area} crop /of the Lower Rio Grande and the Winter Garden area in Zavalla, Frio, Dimmit, and La Salle Counties from December through March. Around the first of September the picking season in the Black Prairie and Grand Prairie areas has started and from there the workers move westward to the High Plains district. From the High Plains, where the main part of the crop is harvested in October, those who follow this complete cycle return to the Winter Garden or to the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Although cotton production provides the most important demand for seasonal workers in Texas, large numbers of migrants are also required for "Winter Garden" vegetables, particularly spinach, citrus fruits, and onions.

It is estimated that 325,000 migrants were employed in Texas agriculture in 1939. From 60 to 65 percent of Texas migratory workers are of south Texas origin. Twenty to twenty-two percent originate in central Texas and 9 to 10 percent in west Texas. Only 2 or 3 percent are from other States. Mexicans (Spanish-speaking whites) are most important among the migratory groups, representing about 85 percent of the total. Other whites are estimated to be about 10 percent and Negroes about 5 percent of the total Texas migratory labor force. 53/

53/ Tolan Committee op. cit., Part 5, Oklahoma City, Migratory Farm Labor in Texas Agriculture, by staff members of Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, pp. 1923-1927.

f. Other southwestern migrations

Workers move out of Texas to work on other crops. The movement of Mexicans to the sugar-beet fields of the Midwestern and Far Western States takes place each year, and involves anywhere from 8,000 to 12,000 workers.

Certain patterns of migration out of Texas are discernible. "According to one authority, a work pattern was to be found in Texas and Oklahoma, beginning at the southern tip of Texas and extending north into Oklahoma, and northwest and west across Texas, New Mexico and Arizona, into California. . . . Two routes out across the Texas Panhandle from Oklahoma to Albuquerque, New Mexico. The beet and berry pickers moved from as far south as San Antonio all the way across intervening States to Minnesota, with branch routes extending out to States on either side of the main routes." 54/

In New Mexico the need for seasonal workers is based on the requirements of the pea, broom corn, and cotton harvests of the Pecos River and the Rio Grande Valleys. The general scale of farm operations in New Mexico is small compared with that found in Texas, Arizona, and California. This is especially true with respect to cotton. It is estimated that at least one-half of the 8,000 to 9,000 seasonal workers required in the harvesting of the three crops must be migratory.

A study of 235 interstate migrant households in New Mexico shows that many of the migrants working these crops had recently removed from farms in Oklahoma and Texas. 55/ Among the migrants in the study who had been on the move for the entire year of 1937, Texas was reported as the principal State of employment by more heads of families than any other State. Oklahoma, New Mexico, and California were also given as principal States of employment by the full-time migratory workers. Part-time migratory workers reported New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma as the States of principal employment. The interstate migratory workers were primarily Anglo-Americans, with some Negro workers who were found primarily in the cotton fields where "they seem to be preferred for picking cotton." Very few of these migrants were of Spanish-American origin. The crops of New Mexico are regarded as sources of employment by removal migrants on the way West as well as by regular migratory workers.

54/ Tolan Committee, op. cit., Hearings, Part 5, pp. 1808, 1884.

55/ Sigurd Johansen, Migratory-Casual Workers in New Mexico. New Mexico Agri. Expt. Station, and W. P. A., (March 1939).

Arizona similarly demands a considerable number of casual seasonal workers for the harvest of its crops and provides a temporary scene of employment for removal migrants seeking a chance to relocate on the Pacific Coast. In a study of 518 cotton workers and their families in Arizona, ^{56/} it was found that 85 percent of the migrants who first left home in 1937 originated in the four western cotton States of Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, and Missouri.

These workers were not regular migrants coming to Arizona but were made up of new refugees moving westward to California. Oklahoma and the other three western cotton States were also the original homes of a large percentage of the full-year migrant group.

In 1937 Arizona cotton growers were dependent for the most part on removal migrants for the vast majority of the workers necessary to pick the cotton crop. These migrants work one season and then move on. They are supplanted by a new group of workers the following year. Thus, Arizona cotton is picked by workers who stream across the State in a continuous movement, a movement which is not part of a cycle of migration such as that found in Texas.

g. Pacific Coast migrations

One of the most recent studies of the removal migrants in California, ^{57/} indicates that, out of 6,655 families studied, 41.6 percent came from Oklahoma, 15.7 percent from Texas, 10.7 percent from Arkansas, 7.1 percent from Missouri, and 5.3 percent from Arizona. Of 5,295 reporting occupations prior to migration, 4,652 reported farm backgrounds. About one-third of those with farm backgrounds had been owners, tenants, or croppers. The reason most frequently given for migration was lack of work but this was fairly closely followed by "drought."

Though removal migrants are currently an important source of seasonal workers in the States of the Southwest and the Pacific Coast, sight should not be lost of the fact that their employment is adapted to an established need of agriculture there. With the rapid expansion of irrigated farming in California since 1890 it has been essential for the operators of the larger farms to recruit labor from "cheap" labor markets of the world.

^{56/} Brown, M. J., and Cassmore, Orin, Migratory Cotton Pickers in Arizona, W. P. A., (1938)

^{57/} Farm Security Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture, A Study of 6,655 Migrant households in California, 1938.
Based on data from migratory farm labor grant recipients.
To be eligible for these FSA grants applicants were required to be bona fide workers in need with less than one full year of residence in the State of California.

The Chinese coolies, originally imported for the construction of the first transcontinental railroad, were later drafted for agriculture and were followed successively by Japanese, Filipinos, workers of Hindustan extraction, Mexicans, and, during the current decade, by relocation migrants, principally from the southern Great Plains States.

In California, agricultural crops requiring significant amounts of labor are produced as far north as Tehama County and southward to San Diego and Imperial Counties. In the Sacramento Valley deciduous fruits, asparagus, and peas require the greatest amounts of labor, totaling about 33,000 workers in 1935. ^{58/} The Central Coast Counties, including Sonoma in the north and San Luis Obispo County in the south, produce deciduous fruits and truck crops requiring about 53,000 workers at their peak. In the San Joaquin Valley, grapes, cotton, and a variety of other crops require a maximum of about 75,000 workers. In Southern California, citrus fruit is the most important single crop except in the Imperial Valley, where lettuce, peas, and melons predominate; the combined labor requirements of these plantings amount to about 56,000 laborers during the period of greatest need.

Table 15 lists the seasonal labor requirements for 53 of the State's 58 counties by months and the demand for migratory workers by months in 33 counties. The figures on seasonal labor requirements take account of the working days available, time limits for the various tasks, distance between jobs, and the mobility and versatility of workers, so that they represent the number of workers that would be needed under a rationalized use of the labor force. It will be noted that the difference between the peak requirements in September and the minimum requirements in March is over 96,000 workers, and that the maximum demand for migrants is for about 50,000 in October. Though the figures are not comparable they give an idea of the relative dependence of agriculture on resident and migrant workers.

Washington, Oregon, California and, to a lesser extent, Idaho represent a fairly continuous labor market. The Idaho areas of intensive agriculture, where sugar beets, potatoes, beans, fruits, and vegetables are grown, follow the course of the Snake River through the State. It is probable that if full advantage were taken of the available resident labor supply, little migration would be necessary. In fact there has been some decline in the once heavy migrations of Mexicans and Filipinos. However, there is still migration for beet work, and for the potato and vegetable harvests.

^{58/} Figures on demand in the county groupings listed are derived from Survey of Agricultural Labor Requirements in California, 1935, State Relief Administration of California, Division of Research and Surveys, December 1935.

Table 15 - Seasonal Labor Requirements and Demand for
Migratory Workers ^{1/} in California Agriculture,
1935.

Month	Seasonal Workers required ^{2/} (53 Counties)	Nonresident laborers required (33 Counties) ^{3/}
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Number</u>
January	61,649	13,004
February	50,500	16,829
March	48,173	13,319
April	73,035	19,407
May	103,240	38,513
June	102,810	30,634
July	93,728	35,366
August	130,330	41,053
September	144,720	41,258
October	126,835	49,551
November	65,610	17,744
December	56,760	7,620

^{1/} Not resident in county of employment.

^{2/} Adams, R. L., Seasonal Labor Requirements for California Crops. Calif. Agricultural Experiment Station. Bulletin 623 Berkeley, Calif., 1938 Table 5, pp. 22-3.

^{3/} State Relief Administration of California, Division of Research and Surveys. Survey of Agricultural Labor Requirements in California, 1935. Table 3, p. 21.

The need for migrants in Oregon is based on the harvest of apples, pears, prunes, cherries, grapes, nuts, and hops in Willamette Valley and the Umpqua and Rogue drainage area. Some 45,000 workers are needed in the Willamette Valley in the early part of July and in recent years this need has been filled by removal migrants, by regular casual migratory workers moving up from California and by intrastate migrants from Portland and from the lesser towns fairly close to the area. The Malheur area with its peas and asparagus requires the importation of workers. Klamath potatoes require roughly 1,500 casually-employed workers in September and October. Some of these migrate into the State from California, but many are recruited from the ranks of the unskilled sawmill workers. ^{59/} In the Hood River and the Dalles areas, apple and berry operations require approximately 10,000 workers.

The demand for seasonal workers in Washington arises from the crops of apples and hops in the Yakima Valley and Wenatchee areas, and from the Puget Sound truck and berry areas. Yakima Valley requires a peak of about 33,000 workers in the second week in September, and about 11,000 in the third week in October, but in no other month of the year are more than 5,000 workers needed, while from the second week in November through the last week in May the number ranges from a few hundred to 2,000. ^{60/} An estimated 4,000 to 6,000 resident laborers are available for this work. In the Puget Sound berry area the demand rises to 27,430.

7. Problems

Fundamentally, the problems of migratory farm workers stem from inadequate income. Like most underprivileged groups, if their earnings were sufficient they could effectively demand better housing, sufficient food, and adequate medical care. Other disabilities of migratory workers flow from their lack of status in the community, occasioned by their disfranchisement, and their loss of settlement. They are American citizens with no voice in the community and incapable of using the polls --the traditional American method of effecting the social or economic betterment of any group of citizens. Their banishment from the political responsibilities of community life results in exclusion from the benefits ordinarily accorded residents of a community--such as adequate relief, protection of civil liberties, etc.

^{59/} Basis for description of Oregon, Idaho, and Washington requirements is analysis by George B Herington, Labor Relations Representative, Farm Security Administration, in unpublished report, Narrative Report of Progress of Study of Agricultural Labor Status, Washington-Oregon-Idaho, 1938.

^{60/} Landis, Paul H., and Brooks, Melvin S., Farm Labor in the Yakima Valley, Washington, Agricultural Experiment Station, State College of Washington Bulletin No. 343, (December 1936) Table 8, p. 29.

a. Earnings, income and relief

The cumulative effects of low agricultural wage rates, unorganized and overcrowded labor markets, irrational movements of workers, uncontrolled recruiting, time losses in movement, time losses while on the job, and seasonal unemployment, result in extremely low earnings for seasonal agricultural workers. Estimates of annual income of family groups, varying with the time and locales of the data, indicate that the median family income of migrant farm workers may be expected to range between \$350 and \$400 (Tables 16 and 17.)

The meagerness of these incomes is demonstrated in available data concerning the extent to which these families were forced to supplement their earnings by recourse to public relief. The Mexicans of South Texas, whose median family earnings during 1938 were high compared with most migratory workers, sought relief in that year in 9 percent of the 300 cases recorded. Along with migratory farm workers' need for relief goes unusual difficulty in obtaining it because of inability to meet residence requirements.

In one of the areas visited in a survey of beet workers conducted by the Children's Bureau, 97 percent of the families visited had received relief in the year prior to the survey. Six months was the most usual period over which relief was received. In a survey of migratory cotton pickers in Arizona, 110 of the 371 migrant family groups which had been on the road only part of the year, had received public assistance of some kind during 1937. Brown and Cassmore noted that it was obvious from the earnings data in the study "that the great majority of the cotton pickers finished the year either actually in need of relief or in immediate danger of becoming so."

FSA Labor Division surveys show relief incomes for from 9 percent to 42 percent of the families included in various surveys. The median amount received ranged from \$25 to \$250 a year (Table 18.)

b. Unemployment

Unemployment and underemployment must be considered in any evaluation of the income of the migratory worker. The limitation that the seasons place on employment in agriculture is unquestionably of main importance in this connection. Actual travel between jobs seems to occasion a relatively slight loss of time. Johansen found that 72 all-year migrant families lost but slightly over 2 weeks of the year on the road, while Brown and Cassmore reported a loss of not more than 3 weeks on the part of the all-year cotton migrants studied.

- 74 -
Table 16 -- Median Family Income of Migratory and Seasonal
Farm Workers as Reported in Selected Studies *

State	Median Annual Income	Number of Families	Year
	<u>Dollars</u>	<u>Number</u>	
Michigan } Minnesota } Wyoming } 1/ (Beet workers) Montana }	430	343	1934-5
California 2/	574	136	1936-7
Texas 3/	154	Not available	1937
Washington 4/	357	178	1935
Arizona 5/ (Cotton pickers)	459	518	1938
New Mexico 6/ (All migrants)	393	48	1937
New Mexico 7/ (Primarily cotton workers)	414	28	1937
Texas 8/ (All families)	561	300	1938
Texas - Beet work	611	175	1938
Texas - Cotton work	559	87	1938
Texas - Other farm work	400	26	1938

* See also Table 22, Page 92.

- 1/ Johnson, Elizabeth S. Welfare of Families of Sugar-Beet Laborers. Does not include relief or value of perquisites.
- 2/ California State Relief Administration, Agricultural Laborers in the San Joaquin Valley, July and August, 1937, p. 5. Does not include relief and presumably does not include value of perquisites.
- 3/ Hamilton, Horace N. Texas Farm Labor Study, unpublished data.
- 4/ Landis, Paul H. and Brooks, Melvin S., Farm Labor in the Yakima Valley, Washington. Agricultural Experiment Station, State College of Washington, Bulletin No. 343 (December, 1936), pp. 55-6. Includes relief income.
- 5/ Brown, Malcolm and Cassmore, Ovin, Migratory Cotton Pickers in Arizona, W. P. A. (1939), p. 14, table 4. Includes relief and value of perquisites.
- 6/ Johansen, Sigurd, Migratory - Casual Workers in New Mexico, New Mexico Agricultural Experiment Station, State College, New Mexico and W.P.A., (1939), p. 31. Does not include relief or value of perquisites.
- 7/ Ibid., earnings of families engaged primarily in cotton work, p. 33. Does not include relief or value of perquisites.
- 8/ Menefee, Selden C. Mexican Migratory Workers of South Texas, W.P.A. (1941), pp. 37-38. Includes income from relief and value of perquisites.

Table 17 - Median Gross Income Including Perquisites and Days Worked During a Preceding Year, for Migratory Farm Worker Families Interviewed in Selected Areas by the FSA Labor Division, 1939 and 1940.

Area and Year	: Total : No. of : Cases ^{1/} : Interviewed:	: No. of : Migrant : Cases ^{1/} : Interviewed:	For Migrants, During Year Preceding Interview ^{2/}	
			Median Gross Income	Median Days Employed
	: Number	: Number	: Dollars	: Days
<u>1940</u>				
Chadbourn area, N.C.	: 181	: 170	: 167	: 126
Elizabeth City area, N.C.:	: 161	: 160	: 415	: 192
Northampton & Accomac Cos: Va.	: 159	: 156	: 376	: 176
Hightstown area, N. J.	: 313	: 311	: 412	: 183
Meggett area, S. C.	: 121	: 119	: 431	: 197
Paducah area, Ky.	: 273	: 196	: 296	: 191
Humboldt area, Tenn.	: 269	: 56	: 251	: 180
St. Johns Co., Fla.	: 244	: 203	: 326	: 192
Burlington Co., N. J.	: 226	: 220	: 716	: 111
Berrien Co., Mich.	: 258	: 257	: 353	: 130
Pemiscott, N. Madrid, Dunklin, S. E. Mo.	: 408	: 100	: 275	: 118
	: :	: :	: :	: :
<u>1939</u>				
Sanford area, Fla.	: 236	: 76	: 313	: 143
Polk Co., Fla.	: 494	: 142	: 653	: 208
Okeechobee area, Fla.	: 532	: 384	: 417	: 173
Manatee Co., Fla.	: 179	: 76	: 353	: 164
Hammond area, La. (Tangipahoa Parish)	: 327	: 304	: 212	: 162
Copiah, Miss.	: 239	: 77	: 233	: 240
Benton Co. and Washington: Co., Ark., & S. W. Mo.:	: 128	: 125	: 327	: 149
White Co., Ark.	: 50	: 50	: 417	: 139
	: :	: :	: :	: :

^{1/} A case represents a family unit, which may consist of one or more persons.

^{2/} Does not include all cases interviewed in all areas because of incomplete answers.

Table 18 - Median Relief Income for Farm Workers Interviewed in Selected Areas by the FSA Labor Division, 1940

Area	Number of Family Heads and Single Persons Interviewed	Percent of Total Families Interviewed Receiving Relief	Median Relief Income of Those Families Receiving Relief
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Dollars</u>
1940			
Chadbourn, N. C.	170	9.4	138.00
Elizabeth City, N.C.	160	18.8	29.75
Northampton Co., Va.	156	9.0	46.25
Hightstown, N.J.	311	19.9	24.71
Meggett, S. C.	119	24.4	32.17
Paducah, Ky.	196	14.8	140.50
Humboldt, Tenn.	56	16.1	165.50
Hastings, Fla.	203	19.2	39.39
Burlington, N.J.	220	33.2	250.00
Berrien Co., Mich.	257	22.5	140.50
Pemiscott Co. etc. S. E. Mo.	100	42.0	90.50

Outside of time lost between jobs, there are many other factors that tend toward underemployment of migrant workers. Johansen's study indicates that in a total employment of 3,438 weeks for 72 all-year migrant families, 958 weeks or 27.9 percent, were lost on the job. Moreover, one-half the jobs held by the 89 families employed in agriculture in this study were of less than 9.7 weeks' duration. Table 17 reports median days of employment, during the year preceding, of migrants interviewed by the FSA Labor Division in various areas. An examination of these data reveals the extent of unemployment which these groups suffered. It should also be mentioned that any work reported, no matter of how short duration, was considered a day's work. Thus workdays of 1 or 2 hours are included in the figures. The problem of full employment is thus associated not only with the intermittent character of the employment periods, but with the intermittent character of daily employment while actually on the job. This, however, is a characteristic of seasonal employment which affects all workers, transient or local, and is discussed more intensively elsewhere in this report.

c. Housing

The living conditions of agricultural migrants have been called worse than those of any other group in the United States. During the 1930's they reached a particularly low point:

"Such families (those of agricultural migrants) probably have the worst living conditions of any group in the United States. Usually they have no homes except temporary roadside or ditch-bank camps, often without any kind of sanitary facilities or even a decent water supply. Ordinarily, their only possessions are a second-hand automobile, a tent, a few blankets, and cooking utensils. Their children have no chance for education, adequate medical care, or normal home and community life. Accumulating any reserve against the gaps between jobs or the risk of accident and illness is completely beyond their reach. Malnutrition and sickness are common among both adults and children. Though relatively free from chronic disease, and younger than the settled population, they suffer from about 74 percent more disabling illness." 61/

Owing to the constant change which characterizes their lives, the housing of migrant workers presents unusual complications. Three aspects are of importance: first, shelter while the migrants are on the road; second, housing while waiting for employment or lying over between jobs; and third, housing while employed.

61/ Report to the President by the Interdepartmental Committee to Coordinate Health and Welfare Activities, Migratory Labor, Social Security Bulletin, September 1940.

Housing on the road consists of a tent or trailer, a low-rent tourist cabin, or merely the shelter of the family car or truck, parked by the roadside. In many parts of the South, the Southwest, and the Pacific Coast, it is a common practice to convert vacant lots on the edge of town into temporary squatters' camps.

"Whatever the cause, every community in Texas which is a concentration point and distribution center of migratory workers becomes, during the harvesting season, suddenly transformed into an open camp with a high fluctuating migrant population deprived of facilities, however primitive, to meet the most elementary needs of life—washing, bathing, cooking, and a decent or protected place to rest or sleep." 62/

Commercial camps are often little better than such squatter arrangements yet cost from \$0.25 to \$1.25 for a single night's lodging. Their advantage lies in the water supply and sanitation, which are often sadly inadequate. Regulation is usually of the most casual sort, consequently they often fall far below ordinary standards of sanitation, cleanliness, and orderliness.

Housing during periods of idleness between jobs is ordinarily of a similar character, with the evils intensified because of longer period of occupancy. But on some farms during slack periods workers are permitted to continue to occupy the cabins in which they live while at work.

As regards the inadequacy of the housing furnished by most growers to their seasonal hands, all sections of the country are on much the same level, whether we refer to the colonies sometimes established by sugar beet companies for Mexican field hands; the tobacco sheds and barns of North Carolina which house the itinerant strawberry pickers in bunks that line the walls; the strawberry shacks of Tangipahoa Parish in Louisiana; the commercial row houses of Belle Glade in Florida; the shacks near the tobacco fields of Connecticut; the apple orchards of Virginia; or the tomato fields of Indiana.

Landis' and Brooks' study of farm labor in the Yakima Valley points out that although the average size of a transient family was 3.5 persons, 66.3 percent of the transient families studied lived in one room dwellings, usually tents or tourist cabins. Of all transient families, 43.3 percent lived in tents, 32.6 percent in tourist cabins and only 11.7 percent in some more permanent form of dwelling. 63/

62/ Silvermaster, N. Gregory, "Summary Report and Recommendations on Migratory Labor Problems in Texas." (Unpublished manuscript)

63/ Landis and Brooks, Op. cit., pp. 42, 43.

Such conditions are common. Overcrowding, filth, vermin, lack of sanitation are characteristic.

In New Jersey, for migratory workers in the cranberry bogs, "crude barracks designed to house ten to thirty families are provided. These barracks offer only a minimum of shelter with no comforts or conveniences. None of those observed had any bathing or laundry facilities. A common kitchen is provided but is usually inadequate, and cooking is done over open fires or on kerosene stoves brought by the workers." 64/

The Texas Farm Placement Service reported the following:

"In March of 1938, the County Judge of one of the principal cotton producing counties of the Amarillo District (Texas) advised the Service that about three hundred Negro workers were stranded on a large cotton plantation in the adjoining county...

"The living quarters for these people are known as 'dug-outs', about three feet in the ground, with weather-board side and roof. There were three or four such places of abode, 80 feet long by 12 feet wide. Bunks were arranged in tiers and approximately 100 people were housed in each 'dug-out'. Cheap wood cook stoves were furnished and large groups used one stove. The ventilation was extremely poor, and there were no toilet facilities except surface toilets. At one time, it was said that there were over five hundred negroes in this camp. These people were piled up like hogs in these places throughout the winter; having no transportation facilities, they could not get away, and the pay received was spent for food. This particular grower made more cotton than he could pick; consequently, he had scattered cotton to pick into March of 1938.

"During the 1937 season, when cotton was good and a good picker could pull 500 pounds or more, 40 and 50 cents was the lowest paid. After Christmas, when cotton was thin and 200 pounds per day was the maximum, this grower reduced the price for pulling to 25 cents per hundred. During rainy weather, when the negroes could not work, he would advance them 20 cents per day in merchandise from his commissary. In February, it was said that there were 23 days of bad weather when no one could work and debt to the commissary was accrued. Their condition became unbearable. The sheriff learned of the situation and visited the camp. He found two dead negroes in one of the dug-outs, covered with old gunny sacks. They had died of pneumonia.

64/ Cruikshank, Nelson H., Notes on Agricultural Labor in Southern New Jersey based on Reconnaissance Trip to Area, September 19-24, 1938 October 19, 1938. (Unpublished Manuscript).

The situation was discussed with the owner of the property and he told the officials that there was nothing to be alarmed about, that as soon as the weather warmed up the negroes would 'fade out.' " 65/

Such conditions constitute a menace to the communities that tolerate them. Inadequate sanitation makes for the breeding and propagation of diseases as does exposure to contaminated water. Crowded quarters increase the hazards of exposure and multiply the contacts so that the danger of spreading diseases to the community is greatly increased.

d. Health of migrants

In the fiscal year 1936-1937 the California Bureau of Child Hygiene carried on a study of the health of migratory children in the Central Valley of California. Table 19 indicates the relative frequency of health defects between the 1,002 migrant children studied and a comparable survey made on 1,000 resident children examined in rural centers and small communities during the same year.

Table 19. Incidence of Health Defects in 1,002 Migratory Children and 1,000 Resident Children Examined by the Bureau of Children's Hygiene in Rural Areas of California, 1936-1937

Residence Status	Age Groups				
	: Less	1 to	2 to		
	: than	less	less	6 and	Total
	: 1	than 2	than 6	over	
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Percent Resident					
Children with Defects	31.1	50.4	73.3	65.7	60.5
Percent Migratory					
Children with Defects	56.8	79.7	85.4	91.3	83.6

Source: Faverman, Anita E. Study of the Health of 1,000 Children of Migratory Agricultural laborers in California. (Report of the Migratory Demonstration, July, 1936 - June, 1937.) California State Department of Public Health, San Francisco. 1937, p. 20

It will be noted that the migratory children appear to suffer from health defects to a very much greater degree than resident children. While the comparative incidence of defects sheds light on the relative disadvantage of the two groups, the fact that 83 out of each one hundred migrant children examined were defective in some respect is even more alarming.

A total of 1,369 defects were found in the 1,002 migratory children. The largest single type of defect observed involved the tonsils and adenoids. However, there were 41 cases of communicable diseases, 32 gastro-intestinal ailments, 167 nutritional defects and 137 respiratory illnesses, or a total of 377 defects more or less directly attributable to inadequate diet and housing. 66/

The public health officials of Kern County, Calif., have closely observed the migrant health problem. Their vital statistics for 1937 indicate infant deaths from prematurity are highest during months when labor requirements for agriculture are greatest. Similarly infant deaths of all kinds increased during the expansion of cotton acreage between 1925 and 1937. 67/ The county depends almost entirely on an influx of migrant workers for the harvest of its cotton crops.

An expression of the Kern County Health Department as to the relationship between poor accommodations and health is found in the following statement from the Kern County Health Bulletin for June 1937:

"With adequate camp facilities available, many of the present problems of our governmental department would be mitigated. 'Squatter camps' could be quickly dissolved. The constant threat of outbreak of communicable disease would be lessened. Health authorities could enforce sanitary provisions, and disease carriers could be effectively controlled...Plenty of fresh water, sanitary toilets, and camps free from flies and vermin would form a basic living condition that would tend to protect the health of the workers and would insure a healthier, sturdier employee to Kern County's greatest industry: agriculture."

The possibilities opened to the migrant groups through supervised and well regulated camps and houses are illustrated in the experience of the Farm Security Administration's camp and labor homes for agricultural workers at Shafter in Kern County. Through the facilities offered by the camp, public health representatives were enabled to make 1,112 home calls on camp families during the first six months of 1938; to hold 23 health inspections involving 785 individual examinations of children in the camp play area; to give prenatal care and instruction to 73 pregnant mothers; to hold seven well-baby clinics with a gross attendance of 270; to give 1,882 individuals typhoid inoculations; to immunize 113 against diphtheria; and to vaccinate 819 against smallpox. 68/

66/ Study of the Health of 1,000 Children of Migratory Agricultural Laborers in California. Op. Cit. Table IX, pp. 22-4

67/ Kern County Department of Public Health, Division of Vital Statistics. Excerpts from Graphic Presentation of Birth, Death and Other Vital Statistics, for Kern County, Year 1937. (Linocographed) P. 12

68/ Rowell, Edward J. "The Child in the Migratory Camp—Health," California Children, Vol. 1, No. 9, September 15, 1938

e. Education

Many factors prevent migrants from obtaining full educational opportunities. Some of these are: the generally lower levels of rural schools, the added strain that a sudden influx of children places on existing facilities, the necessity of employing children of school age in the fields to augment the meagre earnings of their parents, the interruptions in regular school attendance induced by an unsettled way of life, the indifference of parents and school authorities to the attendance of migrant children even where it is presumably compulsory, and the diffidence on the part of parents and children toward school attendance where they do not have suitable clothing.

Attendance records of schools in Imperial County, Calif., indicate the fluctuations which confront educators in communities through which large numbers of migrants pass. Since this county uses much Mexican farm labor, enrollment figures for Mexican children are revealing.

In June 1930, the number of Mexican children enrolled in the school districts with peak enrollment in the fall was 58.5 percent of the annual average Mexican enrollment, while in November of the preceding fall it had been 125.9 percent. In terms of percentage of all children attending, the Mexican element constituted 29.6 percent of the student body in November but only 16.8 percent in June of the same school year. 69/

Shifts of this sort are difficult to predict and as a consequence seasonal schools are crowded and makeshift facilities are often used. In one instance 125 children were crowded into a single room where three teachers were trying to hold classes simultaneously and another in which an abandoned cow barn was used as a school house for migrants. 70/ Frequently, the practice of setting up classes for migrants in auditoriums, hallways, or in temporary tent annexes is resorted to by the school authorities.

The conflict between earning power of the children in the fields and school attendance has been aptly stated by a Superintendent of Public Instruction in a Florida County—"Education is in competition with beans in this county—and beans are winning out."

One device used to ease this conflict is the establishment of special schools for migrants, as is done in some counties in Texas and California, which begin classes at 8 o'clock in the morning and dismiss

69/ Cf. Taylor, Paul S., and Rowell, Edward J. Patterns of Agricultural Labor Migration Within the State of California. Monthly Labor Review, November 1938, Table 1. Apparently monthly "enrollment" data were gathered specially in Imperial County.

70/ Study of the Health of 1,000 Children of Migratory Agricultural Laborers in California. Op. Cit. p. 37

at 12:30, in order to leave the afternoon free for picking cotton. Another is the closing of schools entirely in some areas where there is a short sharp peak of operations. This latter is of some benefit to the children of resident seasonal workers since it permits the children to work without loss of school time. Frequently where the time of harvest permits, the closing of the schools is accomplished through the extension of the period of the teachers' institute.

The indifference of attendance officers toward the enrollment of the children of the mobile seasonal workers is frequently a measure of the attitude of the communities toward the migrants. The Department of Labor notes an instance in which a cotton grower was fined \$50 on each of two charges of employing resident children in the fields, but a third charge was dismissed when it was revealed in the trial that the child was a member of a family from another state. ^{71/} Generally this indifference does not appear so openly, but is reflected in the attitude that a district must first take care of its own.

Inevitably the result of such circumstances surrounding the education of migrant children is retardation. Even where a conscientious effort is made to educate them, their retardation and irregular attendance make adjustments to the schools' routine and discipline most difficult.

Each of the several field studies reporting on this aspect of migrations confirms the failure of our educational systems to reach migratory seasonal workers. In the Washington hop fields, less than half the workers enumerated in one study had advanced beyond the eighth grade and one-fifth had not reached the eighth grade. ^{72/} The California State Relief Administration's study of migratory workers in the San Joaquin Valley divided the children of school age as follows: advanced, whites 8.0 percent, Mexicans, 1.5 percent; normal, whites 22.5 percent, Mexicans, 12.3 percent; retarded, whites 69.6 percent, Mexicans 86.2 percent. The same distribution for all California school children was reported as being: advanced 5.2 percent, normal 45.0 percent, retarded, 49.8 percent. ^{73/}

^{71/} Migration of Workers. Op cit. p. 154

^{72/} Reuss, Carl F., Landis, Paul H., and Wakefield, Richard. Migratory Farm Labor and the Hop Industry on the Pacific Coast. Bulletin No. 363, Agricultural Experiment Station, Pullman, Washington, August 1938, p. 41.

In the Landis and Brooks study, op. cit. p. 60, it is suggested that even in the field of farm labor there may be some correlation between education and earning capacity or at least adaptability to environment. At least it points out that for the families studied there was greater tendency to be on relief for those of less education; 63.4 percent of those who had not passed the eighth grade reported receipt of relief; 48.1 percent of those who had had some high school education; and only 27.8 percent of those who had gone beyond high school.

^{73/} California State Relief Administration, op. cit., p. 14.

"Migratory-Casual Workers in New Mexico" 74/ indicates that of 185 migratory children from 7 to 15 years of age 13.6 percent were advanced, 21.6 percent normal, and 64.8 percent retarded. These figures tally very closely with the experience reported in the California study.

f. Special handicaps of the migratory workers

The loss of "settlement" which results from the migratory life places the migrant in a position in which he cannot exercise the fundamental right of all American citizens--the right to vote. Even in cases where he has maintained settlement in a State, the difficulties involved in casting an absentee ballot usually prevent him from voting.

Inextricably bound up with the exercise of the franchise is the treatment accorded the migrant, who is an outsider in the community, in matters involving civil and political liberties. This, of course, stems also from community attitudes toward the poor or destitute transient who, until the depression, was frequently considered a "hobo." It also flows from the resentment of local workers toward outside laborers who, the former believe, will work under conditions unacceptable to residents.

The preference of many employers for an outside labor force is frequently expressed and is based on the fact that these workers will accept lower wages and generally worse conditions of employment, than will local workers. Of course, there are instances in which the local labor supply is not sufficient to meet the peak seasonal demands of a crop, and farmers, regardless of preferences, are forced to resort to non-local labor. Uncontrolled recruiting frequently results in oversupply and in depression of wage rates, forcing the local worker to accept wage rates offered or be passed over in favor of a migrant.

In 1939 reports of a good harvest brought an excessive number of transient workers to North Dakota. Many of them rode the freights. Along the two mainline railways these laborers congregated in the transient centers of the larger towns and made their "jungles" behind warehouses. They constituted a problem for the communities. In some towns, the police kept transients moving. In others, they were finger-printed, given a meal and a bed in the county jail, and then told to clear out. The transient "jungles" on the outskirts of one city were raided at noon each day. 75/

"Exclusion of the migrants from normal community life is an evil which marks them as a group apart." 76/ Thus, even sugar-beet migrants who are established in the community for 6 and 7 months

74/ Johansen, op. cit., p. 40

75/ Cullum, Folsom and Hay, op. cit.

76/ Tolán Committee, Report, op. cit. p. 39

each year, are physically and socially isolated from the population around them. Elizabeth Johnson found with regard to these workers:

"In most if not all communities visited the beet workers were isolated from the rest of the population, occupationally, socially, and residentially, consequently they were often looked upon as a ~~distinct~~ and inferior social class The low social status of beet laborers appeared to be partly due to their willingness to do the arduous, monotonous hand labor of the beet fields at the wages offered and to the poverty and living conditions associated with their occupation. . . ."

"The feeling against the 'Mexicans', as both Spanish-Americans and Mexicans were locally designated, had apparently been definitely increased during the depression years. When times were good, labor badly needed, and earnings from beet work high enough to support the families the year round, the Spanish-speaking families were comparatively welcome in the beet areas. Under depression conditions, however, they had frequently to be supported during the winter months by communities that resented the need to care for the 'sugar company's Mexicans'. Likewise, willingness of the 'Mexicans' to 'work for half wages and eat half rations' were seen as a threat to the employment opportunities and living standards of the other wage earners of the community. . . . " 77/

In his statement to the Tolan Committee, John Beecher, Supervisor of Farm Security Florida Migratory Labor Camps, stated with regard to the status of migrant and community attitudes toward them:

". . . .Into whatever community the migrant goes his status is the lowest in the social scale. His labor is welcome, but he is not. He and his family are feared as possible sources of physical and moral contagion, and even more as possible public charges should they become stranded there. In no sense does the migrant 'belong'-- he has no political rights and his civil rights have proved to be more theoretical than real on the rare occasions when he has tried to assert them. He and his family seldom participate in the normal social life of the communities through which they pass--they do not as a rule attend the local churches, or frequent the local parks and amusement places. Special recreational devices are sometimes provided to catch their spare pennies--low grade bars and dance halls, cheap fairs, medicine shows, and the like." 78/

77/ Johnson, op. cit., p. 80

78/ Tolan Committee, op. cit. Hearings, part 2, Montgomery, Alabama, p. 536

In instances where the migrants are of foreign extraction or non-white, they are ostracized and denied the privileges of the ordinary American citizen to an even greater extent.

The hostility of a New Jersey community toward migrant Negro potato pickers is illustrated by the following occurrence. Some 1,000 southern Negroes were imported into Cranbury for its potato harvest in 1939. On August 12, 15 masked men wrecked a shack in which 7 Negroes were living. The raiders then drove the potato pickers across a field under a barrage of shotgun fire. Five of the seven were ordered to strip and their hands were then taped behind their backs. The only woman in the group and her husband were taken farther afield and daubed with white paint. The terrified pickers were then warned "to get back down South where you belong." 79/

"Official restrictions on the personal liberties and free movement of migrants have taken various forms." 80/ The methods used have been passage of vagrancy laws and the establishment of border patrols and "bum blockades."

Some of the most serious denials of civil liberties have been in connection with organization by migratory workers to improve their working conditions and terms of employment. This problem is shared by all types of hired farm labor, and is discussed in more detail in a later section. (See p. 139)

79/ Typewritten ms. in files of Labor Division, F.S.A., entitled "Cranbury, New Jersey, August, 1939."

80/ Tolan Committee, Report op. cit., p. 393.

II. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STATUS OF FARM WAGE WORKERS

A. EARNINGS AND INCOMES

A "shift from farming as a way of life to farming as a commercial enterprise" ^{81/} is believed by some writers to have been caused by technical changes in agricultural production, and by increase in the number and productive importance of large farm enterprises. This shift in turn is associated with important alterations in economic relationships among men and women engaged in agriculture. Says one writer, "the trend toward the introduction of business methods on the farm indicates a more extensive use of labor-saving machinery, a reduction in the number of small farmers and the traditional hired men, and the creation of a large landless agricultural working class." ^{82/}

In spite of the size and importance of this class, information is scanty concerning its standards and problems of living. The farm laborer is the forgotten man in American agriculture. What little material is available indicates that farm laborers, as a group, receive lower average incomes and have lower standards of living than most other occupational classes in America.

Moreover, the birth rate among farm laborer groups is higher than that in any other major occupational class in the Nation. One-fifth of all farm families in the Nation are farm laborer families. The scope of the problem of their earnings and levels of living becomes apparent.

1. Incomes and Levels of Living

Income is the greatest single factor influencing the living standards of farm labor. Incomes of farm laborers are far below what is needed for a decent standard of living for their households.

The farm laborer family must spend most of its income for bare necessities--food, clothing, and shelter, but above all, for food.

Summarizing many studies of standards of living, Carl C. Taylor and others conclude: ^{83/}

"....when the income is below \$1,000 per year, 59.9 percent of the entire budget must be spent for food and 92.8 percent must be spent for purely physical needs excluding health.

^{81/} Tolan Committee Report, op. cit., p. 276

^{82/} Hopkins, William S., Social Insurance and Agriculture, Social Science Research Council, Pamphlet Series No. 5, Washington, September, 1940 p. 2. (italics supplied)

^{83/} Taylor, Carl C., Wheeler, Helen W., and Kirkpatrick, E. L., Disadvantaged Classes in American Agriculture, U. S. Dept. of Agric. Social Research Rep. No. VIII, Washington D. C., April 1938, p. 8.

Families with income as low as \$600 per year cannot even have adequate food, clothing, and shelter, and their lives are inevitably robbed of practically everything except these bare physical necessities. In areas where 50 percent or more of the families live on this low income level, the area can hardly be described as anything but a rural slum. In such areas low-income families not only live under disadvantages themselves, but tend to pull down the level of the social and institutional life of the communities in which they live.

"When gross farm income is at the low level of \$600 per year, an increased proportion of the income naturally must go for food to provide even the barest essentials to sustain life. The housing of families at this income level offers only the very minimum of shelter and comfort, and the clothing is anything but adequate. After the items of food, housing, and clothing are accounted for in the family budget, very little, if any, remains for so-called 'advancement' items, including education, religion, recreation, charity, insurance, and health."

In part, the low income of farm laborers is caused by low wage rates, but in even greater degree by insufficient employment, attributable to the inevitable seasonality of agriculture, and to the surplus of farm labor manpower which has existed in rural areas in relation to the opportunities for its effective use.

Available data on incomes received by hired farm workers, although scattered and incomplete, acquire added significance when compared with the annual incomes that would be received if workers were able to secure full-time employment at rates reported by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the Department of Agriculture. ^{84/} (Table 20) Full-time individual earnings at monthly rates without board would have ranged in 1940, under these conditions, from \$280 in the East South Central States, to \$793 on the Pacific Coast. Similarly, earnings at daily rates, without board, would have been \$208 and \$558, respectively, in these areas.

It is revealing to compare such possible earnings with those actually reported in a series of 11 uniform field studies conducted in 1936. These showed average annual earnings of adult farm laborers plus dependents, ranging from \$131.06 in a Louisiana parish, to \$650.99 in a California county. (Table 21) Such sums

^{84/} These figures, it is admitted, furnish a more accurate picture of the average rates paid to laborers in the general farming areas of the country than they do in the specialized crop areas, where casual employment and piece rates prevail and labor is hired to a considerable degree through contractors. However, they are the only continuous and Nation-wide series of wage rate data available.

Table 20 - Earnings in terms of reported wage rates
assuming full time employment, 1940. 1/

Regions	: Average wage : rate per month : without board	: Earnings : if fully : employed	: Average wage : rate per day : without board	: Earnings : if fully : employed
	: <u>Dollars</u>	<u>Dollars</u>	<u>Dollars</u>	<u>Dollars</u>
New England	: 57.62	691	2.64	528
Middle Atlantic	: 46.61	559	2.37	474
East North Central	: 41.64	500	2.12	424
West North Central	: 38.75	465	2.01	402
South Atlantic	: 26.90	323	1.22	244
East South Central	: 23.30	280	1.04	208
West South Central	: 28.17	338	1.24	248
Mountain	: 51.89	623	2.25	450
Pacific	: 66.07	793	2.79	558
United States	: 36.68	440	1.59	318

1/ Full time employment for monthly wage rate assumed to be 12 months;
for daily wage rate, 200 days.

Source: Crops and Markets, Vol. 18, Nos. 1, 4, 5, 6, January, April,
May and June 1941.

Table 21—Average annual income of farm workers from agricultural and nonagricultural sources in one county in each of eleven States, and proportion of single workers, 1935-1936 ^{1/}

County, State and Area	Total	Agri-	Nonagri-	Average	Percentage
	earnings	cultural	cultural	relief	with no
	: : Dollars	: : Dollars	: : Dollars	: : Dollars	: : Dependents
1. Fentress County, Tenn. Self-sufficing area	: 111.57	69.06	42.51	15.21	43.2
2. Concordia Parish, La. Cotton area	: 131.06	100.04	31.02	6.21	49.0
3. Karnes County, Tex. Cotton area	: 170.54	162.13	8.41	1.36	25.6
4. Todd County, Ky. Tobacco area	: 187.70	168.60	19.10	3.36	36.1
5. Lac qui Parle County, Minn. Wheat area	: 206.33	135.26	21.07	3.49	94.2
6. Pawnee County, Kans. wheat area	: 254.41	212.05	42.36	7.48	67.5
7. Archuleta County, Colo. Stock Ranch area	: 341.18	224.13	117.05	19.66	63.6
8. Livingston County, Ill. Corn area	: 307.92	286.36	27.01	9.55	55.0
9. Hamilton County, Iowa Corn-Hog area	: 311.68	292.57	19.11	5.02	68.8
10. Wayne County, Pa. Dairy area	: 353.29	285.96	67.33	1.31	73.4
11. Placer County, Calif. Fruit area	: 650.99	626.95	24.04	7.49	30.7

^{1/} Sources: Surveys of agricultural labor conditions in the respective areas, and published with titles similar except the area names. For example, that for Tennessee is: Vasey, Tom, and Folsom, Josiah C. Survey of Agricultural Labor Conditions in Fentress County, Tennessee. United States Department of Agriculture. The Farm Security Administration and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Washington, D. C. Data are arithmetic means.

^{2/} Total gross earnings, exclusive of relief receipts. Data on perquisites and home-use goods and on travel expenses not secured.

are low for laborers without families, and seriously deficient for those with families.

Other recent studies, though not uniform with the foregoing, confirm the inadequacy of total earnings of farm laborers in a variety of crops over many areas. (Table 22) 85/

For example: In the Yakima Valley, Washington, the median annual cash income of farm laborer families interviewed in 1935-6, was between \$500 and \$600; of single workers, between \$350 and \$400. The median number of weeks worked per year ranged from between 40 and 50 for families: to only 36 to 39 for heads of families or workers without families. The foregoing were all nonrelief cases. The plight of relief cases was far more serious. Their median annual earnings for families was between \$200 and \$225; for family heads, between \$170 and \$180; for single laborers, between \$135 and \$155. Total annual employment ranged from 11 to 20 weeks; that is, from less than three to perhaps five months. 86/

2. Wage Rates

Wage-rates alone are of little value as indicators of the economic position of workers who receive them. Earnings are products of two factors: wage-rates and time employed. Irregular employment at relatively high wage rates frequently yields lower annual earnings than continuous employment at relatively low rates.

The only continuous statistical series on farm wage rate is that compiled quarterly by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the Department of Agriculture, which reports wage rates on per-day and per-month bases, with and without board. Wide regional variations are revealed by these data.

3. Time-Rates vs. Piece-Rates

The employer usually chooses whether time-rates or piece-rates shall be paid. Piece-rate pay usually has advantages for him over time-rate, because the former makes easier the employment of workers of varied speed and degree of skill. Under piece-rates women and children may frequently be used to supplement adult male labor, which might not be practicable under time-rates. Piece-rates remove any incentive for the individual worker to permit work to "drag along" in the hope of prolonging the period of employment. Piece-rates offer a further advantage to the employer by making uniform the costs attributable to each unit of production.

85/ For earnings of sharecroppers see pp. 47-51

86/ Landis and Brooks, op. cit., p. 59

Table 22 — Earnings of farm laborers: Various studies, 1935-39 *

Area, type of agriculture and labor	: Median annual cash	
	: earnings exclusive of	
	: relief income	
	: <u>Dollars</u>	
1. Sugar Beet labor families, 1935 ^{1/} (Resident and nonresi-		
dent; Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Wyoming)		
A. From sugar beets only		340
B. From all sources		430
2. Yakima Valley-Washington, 1935-36		
Resident		
A. Fruit and general farms ^{2/}		
Single workers		217
Family heads		198
Non-resident		
A. Fruit and general farms ^{2/}		
Single workers		334
Family heads		297
B. Hop pickers, 1936-7 ^{3/}		
Single persons		
Earning in agriculture only		352 ^{4/}
Earning in agriculture and elsewhere		
-non-relief cases		620 ^{4/}
-relief cases		566 ^{4/}
Families		
Earning in agriculture only		496 ^{4/}
Earning in agriculture and elsewhere		
-non-relief cases		826 ^{4/}
-relief cases		549 ^{4/}
3. New Jersey		
A. Truck, general, dairy, 1935 ^{5/}		431 ^{4/}
B. Truck, 1938 ^{6/}		265 ^{4/}
4. Texas, 1937 ^{7/}		
A. Migratory labor		228
B. Resident labor		228
5. California: Non-resident, 1935 ^{8/}		261 ^{9/}
6. Florida, 1938-9 ^{10/}		
A. Migratory truck labor, Okeechobee area		399 ^{11/}
B. Migratory truck labor, Manatee area		345 ^{11/}
C. Citrus labor, Polk County		688 ^{11/}
D. Celery labor, Sanford area		281 ^{11/}
7. Louisiana, 1938-9 ^{10/}		
A. Migratory strawberry labor, Hammond area		203 ^{11/}

(continued)

TABLE 22 (continued)

-
- 1/ Johnson, Elizabeth S., Welfare of Families of Sugar Beet Laborers, Bureau Publication No. 247, Children's Bureau, Department of Labor. 1939, pp. 61-68.
 - 2/ Landis, Paul H. and Brooks, Melvin S., Farm Labor in the Yakima Valley, Washington, Washington Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin No. 343. 1936. pp. 54, 70. The differences in income of resident and transient groups is probably partly explainable by an abnormally large proportion of relief cases among the resident group. Relief cases have much lower incomes than others.
 - 3/ Reuss, Carl F., Landis, Paul H., and Wakefield, R., Migratory Farm Labor and the Hop Industry in the Pacific Coast, Washington Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin No. 363, 1938. p. 56.
 - 4/ Arithmetic average.
 - 5/ Folsom, J. C., Farm Labor Conditions in Gloucester, Hunterdon and Monmouth Counties, New Jersey, April-May, 1936. U. S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Washington, D. C. 1939. p. 44.
 - 6/ A Summer in the Country, National Child Labor Committee, New York, N. Y., Pub. No. 377. 1939, p. 13.
 - 7/ Unpublished data obtained by Texas Agricultural Experiment Station in 1938.
 - 8/ Migratory Labor in California, California State Relief Administration, San Francisco. 1936. p. 121.
 - 9/ The arithmetic average was \$289.
 - 10/ Unpublished data obtained by the Farm Security Administration early in 1939. The families were working predominantly in the types of production named. Earnings of white families were considerably higher, sometimes nearly double those of colored families.
 - 11/ Includes some perquisites, which were received in rare instances.
- * See Tables 16 and 17, pp. 74-75, for income data more specifically concerning migratory farm laborers.

From the employee's point of view the piece-rate enables him to earn as much each day as his physical abilities permit and to increase total earnings by using his entire family to add their output to his own.

When care and quality are essential, or where the work done does not lend itself to standard measurement by the piece, time-rates are preferred. Where labor has gained sufficient organized strength, it has called for the adoption of time-rates as the first step toward winning the principle of the living wage; because time-rates ignore variations in the output of workers. Where work is steady, as in the case of a permanent "hired hand", the time-rate is paid in the form of a daily or monthly wage.

The seasonal worker, however, is usually paid on a piece-rate basis, minus possible penalties. Deductions for work not up to a set standard may be made before piece-rate wages are paid out.

On some farms where small numbers of hired laborers work with their employers, efforts have been made to increase efficiency by sharing profits. Sometimes this has been done by granting a bonus on the total net profits of the farm, but more often by sharing returns on certain enterprises which have been made the responsibility of the hired worker. Profit-sharing of this kind is really an attempt to apply the principle of the piece-rate to more varied farm operations that do not lend themselves to unit measurement. However, this bonus method has never been widely practiced. Most frequently it has been used as an incentive to profitable farming practices on the part of hired managers, rather than hired hands, as such.

4. Speed of Work

The prevailing method of payment in modern industry is by the hour. Sometimes the speed of workers is stepped up and maintained by linking their activity to the operations of a machine. This method of boosting production has often resulted in harm to workers' health.

Agricultural processes offer little opportunities for "speed-ups", though in some instances similar practices have been applied. On one large farm in the wheat belt the operator reported that a tape recording device was attached to the tractor so as to record every minute of idle time. In other cases where mobile equipment is used together with labor, the machine can be employed to set the pace for

the worker. In California, for example, workers digging potatoes are assigned "spaces"; usually about 75 paces apart, behind the tractor-drawn digger.

Sometimes the speediest workers are used to set a pace for others. In hoeing corn and cotton, and in cutting cane, "row men" are employed, sometimes at slightly higher rates of pay, to set the pace. In California fruit groves a "pacer" is assigned one row of trees, and pickers are discharged if they do not keep up with him.

5. Variations in Regional Wage Rates

Reasons for regional variations in wage rates for similar work are not easy to isolate. It has been suggested that they "appear to be due to differences in the effectiveness with which productive resources and equipment are used in relation to manpower; such factors as the industrial competition for labor, the opportunity for some degree of permanence of employment, the efficiency of the laborers and their standards of living, also have influence." ^{87/}

The ranking of geographical divisions according to wage rates in agriculture follows roughly the order according to (a) gross, and (b) net farm income. ^{88/}

6. Forms of Wage Payment

Throughout the country, cash is the predominant form in which agricultural wages are paid. Scrip and token money have been used frequently, but, other than cash, the only important form of payment is that of "perquisites." Because of their variations, perquisites complicate greatly the problem of determining just what real wages are actually being paid to farm workers.

"In industry, cash wages prevail and variations are likely to apply to a considerable number of workers. In agriculture, on the other hand, perquisites make up nearly two-fifths of the wages of non-casual hired farm hands the country over and their nature may vary from farm to farm. Perquisites are ordinarily defined as emoluments given in addition to wages at the going rate. In agriculture, however, they are looked upon by both worker and employer as emoluments in place of cash wages, the two together constituting total wages.

^{87/} Ham, William T. The Status of Agricultural Labor. Law and Contemporary Problems. Vol. IV, No. 4, October 1937, p. 564

^{88/} Black, John D. Agricultural Wage Relationships: Geographical Differences. Review of Economic Statistics. Vol. XVIII, No. 2, May 1936, p. 68-69

Perquisites may include a wide range of goods and services, such as board and room, housing, dairy and meat products, flour and meal, and various privileges, such as that of keeping livestock, with feed or pasturage. The precise combination is determined by custom." ^{89/}

The practice of giving perquisites is widely prevalent. In 1925, it was found that 97.5 percent of the non-casual and 85.5 percent of casual farm laborers received them. Board was given to 50.5 percent of the non-casual laborers, and to 74.1 percent of the casual laborers. Lodging was provided for 74.3 of the former and for 61.7 percent of the latter. ^{90/}

B. CAUSES OF INADEQUATE EMPLOYMENT

Failure of the agricultural worker to secure enough employment, even though wage rates are at a reasonable level, to make possible a living at minimum standards for himself and family the year round may be due to competition for jobs available, or to that seasonal irregularity which is a part of agriculture itself. Competition for farm employment comes from two sources--first, from other wage workers of rural or industrial origin, and second, from workers who are unpaid members of farm families. There appears to be a tendency for the competition from unpaid farm family workers to increase during periods of economic depression. Unfortunately, this is also the time when wage earners, ordinarily employed in industry, flock to the country to compete with the bona fide agricultural wage workers for the decreased number of jobs.

1. Seasonality of Work. The necessarily seasonal character of many types of agricultural work is usually offered as an explanation of the irregular character of much farm employment. Cotton must be picked before it becomes discolored or lost; wheat must be harvested within a few days of its ripening if it is not to fall or be damaged by rain. Fruit must be gathered before it falls or rots. The farmer's return from a year's investment of management, labor, and cash depends largely upon his ability to get the crop harvested at the right time. Seasonal help, often in considerable volume, is frequently indispensable for a short period. The type of farming and the kinds of crops produced largely decide how much labor will be hired during the busy seasons of the spring, summer, and fall.

^{89/} Ham, William T. The Status of Agricultural Labor. Law and Contemporary Problems. Vol. IV, No. 4, October 1937, p. 564

^{90/} Folsom, Josiah C., Perquisites and Wages of Hired Farm Laborers, Technical Bulletin No. 213 U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., January, 1931, pp. 52-54.

The employment of hired helpers is subject to much greater seasonal variation than is the employment of farm families. Analysis of data for the years 1925-1936 indicates that the employment of hired labor will usually range from a low of 70 percent of the annual average in January to highs of 119, 120 and 122 percent of the annual average in the months of June, July and October, respectively. The seasonal variation in employment of family workers on the other hand is less, usually ranging from 84 percent of the annual average in January to 115 percent in June and 111 percent in July and October. ^{91/} The demand for seasonal labor varies greatly in the different crop producing regions.

Indicative of the seasonal nature of such employment, even for owners and operators, are the Census data on off-farm employment for pay or income. Of the 6,096,799 farm operators in 1940, 28.7 percent had worked thus in 1939. The average number of days in such employment was 137 per operator reporting any. Two out of 7 who worked part-time away from their farms, did some work on other farms. It is estimated that 13 percent of the available working time of the operators was spent in off-farm employment for gain.

2. Climatic Conditions. Aside from the basic alternations of season, variations from the normal climatic cycle may affect employment drastically. A retarded season at planting time may result in a shift from one crop to another in an area, marked by changing the labor demand later in the season. For example, either weather conditions or anticipated market conditions in truck-growing areas may cause a shift from a crop (such as green beans or tomatoes), calling for large amounts of labor later in the season, to a crop (such as cabbage) which will call for about one-third as much labor in harvesting operations, and at a different time. After the crops are planted the amount of labor needed remains uncertain. Excessive rain, hail, or windstorms, frosts, droughts, insect pests, diseases, or other of the numerous unpredictable hazards of farming, may render useless further expenditure for labor. There is no uniformity in the distribution of these causes for crop damage from year to year and the workers who come into the area from outside have no way of knowing the conditions of the crop in particular sections, so they frequently go to a locality where in previous seasons they have had plenty of work, only to find that crop losses have wiped out the need for them.
3. Marketing Conditions. Irregularity of work of the farm laborer is also due in part to changes in market conditions, especially in the case of perishable crops. Lettuce, which requires a large amount of hand labor in its harvest, provides one of the most striking illustrations of these fluctuations. In the harvesting of deciduous crops such as apricots and peaches, the grower finds his prices contingent upon conditions similar to those in the lettuce market. When the prices for fruit for canning and for fresh fruit fall sharply, the grower finds he is better off not to go to the expense of harvesting the crop. Such conditions are disastrous to growers and laborers alike. The hardship to the worker is more akin
^{91/} Bowden, Witt, Farm Employment, 1909 to 1938. Monthly Labor Review, Vol. 48 No. 6, June 1939, p. 1251

to that experienced by the operator than is sometimes recognized. Just as the grower has his investment in the crop and is dependent on the harvest for the return of his earlier outlays as well as for a profit, so the worker has come to the area in anticipation of receiving employment, frequently having spent for travel all he could save from other jobs through the season, only to find on arrival that there is no demand for his labor.

However, the irregularity of employment from which hired agricultural laborers frequently suffer cannot all be laid at the door of seasonality or market conditions or type of farm organization. Much of it, as will be indicated later, is due to lack of proper facilities for getting men to jobs and finding jobs for men.

4. Hours of Work

In nonagricultural industries the average length of the normal work day declined from 11.5 hours in 1850 to about 8.1 hours in 1937. ^{92/} There has also been wide acceptance of the five or five-and-a-half day week. ^{93/} In 1890 the normal work week was 58 hours. ^{94/} In 1940 the normal work week was 40 hours for workers coming under the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. It has been estimated that more than 12,600,000 are affected by this work week. ^{95/}

In agriculture the problem is not only that of a long work day but also that of a short work day. In the case of the hired man, the long work day is the general practice, but the problem of the seasonal worker is quite different. In a situation in which there is an excess supply of labor, with farm workers competing with each other for jobs, the farm operator can maintain a long work day when conditions are favorable for a quick harvest, but when conditions are not favorable he can employ his labor for only part of the day.

A study of hours of work of farm operators and hired men in the principal farming areas in the United States shows that the work day on farms in 1936 was practically as long as that a century earlier in industry and manufacturing. The data collected do not indicate

^{92/} Daugherty, Carroll R. Labor Problems in American Industry, New Ed. Cambridge, 1938, p. 192.

^{93/} The Bureau of Labor Statistics, in a survey of 395 plants in 11 industries, showed that 210 of these plants were on either a five or five-and-a-half day week. Monthly Labor Review, March 1941, p. 541.

^{94/} Daugherty, Carroll R., op.cit., p. 192

^{95/} Monthly Labor Review, December 1940. p. 1470.

great differences in the length of the work day as between areas or as between the three busy seasons. The longest days for operators (13.2 hours) are reported for the summer season in the Winter Wheat area and the shortest--excepting those for specialized farms--for the spring season in Mississippi, Arkansas, Texas Cotton area (10.4 hours). For hired workers the longest days (12.5 hours) are reported for the spring season in the Western Dairy area and the shortest--excepting specialized farms--for the spring and fall seasons in the Eastern Cotton area and the spring season in the Mississippi, Arkansas, and Texas Cotton area (11.4 hours). 96/

The seasonal worker, who follows the harvest from one area to another with the result that he is generally employed in a series of rush periods, is also subject to long work days. Frequently because of the condition of the market, the harvest hand may work only a small part of the day, but must remain available for work. In some crops like citrus fruits, the harvest may be delayed or spread over a considerable period when the prices are low, but when good prices are reported, growers become anxious to get as much as possible delivered to the market before it breaks. During the potato harvest in Central New Jersey, harvesting operations are "irregular and feverish. If weather and market conditions are favorable for digging and picking, operations usually begin at 4 a.m. or 5 a.m. and last till 10 a.m. or 11 a.m. During the late morning and early afternoon usually no work is performed because potatoes are subject to scorch from the sun. Work usually resumes at about 4 p.m. and continues until dark. No potatoes are dug, picked, or graded, however, until they are sold. The major requirement for workers in potatoes, according to the farmers, is the ability to 'stand hard work and heat,' and workers must be willing to work at any hour when needed for the wages offered." 97/

In the hop yards of the Yakima Valley, Washington, over three-fourths of a group of 443 pickers interviewed were in the field for 10 or more hours a day. One-fifth of them worked 12 hours. Hop picking is back-breaking work, paid for on a piece rate basis, so that the cost of any rest periods or inefficiency due to fatigue is borne by the pickers. 98/

Sugar beet workers, practically all of whom are employed on an acreage-contract basis, work during the two rush seasons as many hours each day as human endurance will permit. In the thinning and hoeing operations pressure for long hours arises from the provision in the contract that the grower may hire extra help and deduct its pay from the contract price. In "topping" there is added pressure arising from the necessity of leaving the beets in the ground as long as possible to insure a high sugar content, and yet of getting them out of the ground before freezing weather. Thus the harvesting season is telescoped into a very short period. Hours of labor,

96/ Hopkins, John A., and Newman, Wm. A., Length and Changes in the Farm Work Day, Report No. 54, National Research Project, WPA, 1937 pp. 6, 11, 13, 16. June, '41.

97/ Liss, Samuel, "Farm Migrants in New Jersey", Land Policy Review/

98/ Reuss, C.F., Landis, P.H. and Wakefield, R. Migratory Farm Labor & the Hop Industry on Pac. Coast, Agri. Exp. Sta., Bul. No. 363 (1938) p. 24-25

according to a survey made in 1935 by the Children's Bureau of the U. S. Department of Labor, were at least 12 a day for half of the fathers of families at thinning time and at least 11 hours a day for half of them at topping time. The work week has 6 and sometimes 7 days. 99/

Hours of work for those employed in the seasonal labor of harvesting the vegetable and fruit crops in the southern part of New Jersey are frequently longer than those for regular hired workers. 100/ Here, also, since piece rates prevail, there is no standard work day. The hours of work are determined by the conditions of the market, the weather, the available labor supply, and the limits of human endurance. In a study of 251 families employed in this area in the summer of 1938, 10 and 12 hour days were found to be common. The longest hours were worked in asparagus, tomatoes, potatoes, and string beans. 101/

Thus, the usual objectives of farm workers, as far as hours of work are concerned, are two-fold: first, to decrease the length of the work day without reducing total earnings, and second, to provide for some form of compensation for days in which they report for work but learn that there is little or no work available.

In nonagricultural industries this problem has been lessened to some extent by the recognition by business of its responsibility toward its workers, by the enactment of Federal and State maximum hour laws, and by contracts negotiated between employers and labor organizations. It is not uncommon for union contracts to limit the length of the work day and to provide for compensation to the worker when he reports for work and finds no work is available. This practice exists in the shipbuilding, aircraft, rubber, railway, coal and newspaper industries. 102/

99/ "Wages, Employment Conditions and Welfare of Sugar Beet Laborers," Monthly Labor Review, February, 1938, p. 332

100/ Folsom, Josiah C., Farm Labor Conditions in Gloucester, Hunterdon and Monmouth Counties, New Jersey, April-May, 1936, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., 1939.

101/ A Summer in the Country, National Child Labor Committee, New York, 1939, p. 22.

102/ For a discussion of the exclusion of agriculture from legislative limitations on hours of work, see p. 170.

5. Labor Turnover

Labor turnover in agriculture is high as compared with that in other industries—higher, indeed, than can be accounted for by strictly seasonal considerations. In some areas of high seasonal labor requirements, a new working force is recruited each day. Little attention has been devoted by farm operators to the costs involved in a high rate of turnover or to means of reducing it.

Use of Perquisites to Reduce Turnover. Some types of agricultural enterprises, however—such as dairying—which afford relatively long periods of employment, recognize that a high labor turnover involving constant training of new personnel may be more costly than the effort to reduce it. Accordingly, such enterprises often emphasize the necessity of providing satisfactory living quarters for farm workers and their families, sometimes at no cost to the worker, or at a relatively low cost, provided he remains throughout the season. Permission is usually given to occupy the quarters during periods when there is no work on the farm. Electric light, water, and other facilities and perquisites may be provided free of charge.

On the other hand, where seasonal labor is employed and a surplus of labor exists, the farm operator does not feel responsible for providing decent lodging for his workers. When workers are paid on a piece-rate basis and the harvesting requires little or no skill, the farm employer is not particularly concerned over the labor turnover and does not find it necessary to offer any inducements for labor to remain on the job.

Use of Penalties to Reduce Turnover. However, during certain seasons in areas in which it is necessary to keep seasonal labor at hand, especially in areas remote from centers of population, penalties rather than inducements are resorted to. One of the most common is the "hold-back", or "bonus", as it is often called by those who favor its use. Under the "bonus" a portion of the payment for work performed early in the season is withheld until completion of work scheduled to be performed later in the season. This system is used most extensively in the sugar beet States, where by custom the grower holds out \$1 per acre of the amounts earned by the beet worker in the spring or early summer for "blocking, thinning, and hoeing," as a guarantee that the same worker and his family will be on hand to take care of the harvesting, or "topping" of the beets in the fall.

Pea pickers in Colorado, California, and Idaho, hop pickers in the Yakima Valley, Washington, strawberry workers in North Carolina, and many other groups have become accustomed to being paid on a piece-work basis, with a "bonus" to follow if they stay until crops are harvested. Objection to this system on the part of the worker is common, on the ground that the "bonus" is not an extra wage payment, but is rather the arbitrary withholding of a payment already due.

Other methods of keeping laborers on the job depend on credit advances by operators or labor contractors, so designed that the worker falls into debt and is kept in that status until his payments at the end of the season permit him to "pay out." This system is by no means confined to cotton sharecropping, where it has long been in use, but is also found frequently in all systems of labor contracting. The labor contractor, is, of course, in a very advantageous position in the collection of his loans, for the worker depends upon him for future employment. In a report on conditions in New Jersey truck crops farms in 1938, the National Child Labor Committee states that the "padrone" is further fortified in his control over the movement of workers through the fact that he is able to give or withhold information which will affect the granting of relief. 103/

6. Inefficient Recruiting

An additional cause of inadequate employment among agricultural workers is the inefficiency in recruiting workers in many areas. This inefficiency results in much lost time and labor turnover and is discussed under THE FARM LABOR MARKET, beginning on page 117.

C. WAGE PAYMENTS AND COLLECTIONS.

Most wage earners, completely dependent upon their pay envelopes, need to receive pay regularly and at comparatively short intervals. Yet it is not uncommon for farm employers to pay wages at long intervals, or withhold them for considerable lengths of time, or even fail to pay them in full. The resident industrial worker and his family who loses a week's wages may suffer want and privation, or remain dependent on borrowing. The seasonal agricultural worker and his family may be hopelessly stranded by delay or failure in payment of wages (as in the case of many Dust Bowl migrants who ~~were~~ recruited to pick cotton in New Mexico in 1936 and were unable to return to their homes). If workers move, on the other hand, they may never get paid. The practice of withholding wages until it suits the convenience of the employer to pay, often means that workers, despite their own narrow margins, are obliged to help finance for considerable periods of time the farm which employs them.

103/ A Summer in the Country, National Child Labor Committee, New York, 1939, p. 15.

Farm workers are sometimes deprived entirely of wages due them for work they have done. In some cases farm operators do not pay seasonal workers in agriculture until all other obligations are taken care of. In other cases, wages are withheld to insure that workers remain until the close of the harvest season. Often, because of the eagerness for employment, farm workers fail to come to an understanding as to the amount they are paid. Legitimate wage claims are often never pressed because the workers fear retaliation. In many States lack of civil rights has handicapped Negro, Mexican, Spanish-American, and Filipino workers in taking advantage of legal means to obtain what is theirs by right.

A study by the National Child Labor Committee revealed that in Oregon and Washington, hop growers withhold from 10 to 25 percent of the wages of hop pickers, to be paid to the worker only if he stays on the job until the end of the season. ^{104/} In paying wages, most hop growers use a ticket on which is punched or written indelibly the number of pounds in each bag weighed. Hop tickets are cashable at a company store, at which pickers are expected to buy. Failure to do so sometimes results in delay in the payment of wages.

Another investigation of about 250 migrant agricultural workers employed in southern New Jersey during the summer of 1938, showed that in many cases wages were held back, in full or in part. The workers felt "this was done to force them to remain on the farm whether they were earning anything or not." The investigation also revealed that "for the most part the families were in debt for living expenses and had no choice but to remain until they could collect earnings and pay their bills." One family received nothing for picking beans because the farmer "forgot" about it. Another family was "still trying in mid-October to collect \$85 for day work done in June." ^{105/}

^{104/} Sidel, James E., Pick for Your Supper, A study of Child Labor Among Migrants on the Pacific Coast, National Child Labor Committee, June 1939, p. 17.

^{105/} National Child Labor Committee, A Summer in the Country, Publication No. 377, New York, March 1939, pp. 16-17.

D. HOUSING

The great majority of the million and a half houses occupied by farm laborers and sharecroppers are below standards of health and decency.

1. Typical Areas

Here are some significant examples:

a. Missouri

In Southeast Missouri, 85 percent of the white farm laborer families and nearly all the Negro families lived in small unpainted box houses. 106/ A box house is a single-wall house, constructed without wall studding. Strips are sometimes placed over the cracks, but frequently not. Many of the houses do not have glass windows; those that do very often have broken window panes.

b. Texas

In a Texas study of 573 laborers' houses, 107/ the typical residence was a two-room box house. Half of these were unscreened and most of the remainder were either inadequately screened or the screens were in poor condition. Nineteen percent of the houses had no glass windows; 79 percent were in fair condition; and only 18 percent were in good condition; 53 percent were valued at less than \$150 and 70 percent at less than \$250; 7 percent had no privy of any kind and 87 percent had unsanitary unimproved outdoor privies. Nine and a half percent of occupants owned their homes; 54 percent received their houses rent free; and 36.5 percent paid an average of about \$3 per month rent. The above facts apply to the permanent homes of Texas farm laborers. When these families go on the road to pick cotton, as over half of them do, they have practically no housing facilities at all. Of 283 such families surveyed away from home, 162 had no housing whatever; 2 were rooming and boarding; 13 lived in their trucks; 41 lived in open sheds; 11 lived in barns; 18 lived in little labor shacks; and 36 lived in houses similar to their permanent homes.

106/ White, Max R., Ensminger, Douglas, and Gregory, Cecil L., Rich Land - Poor People, Research Report I, Farm Security Administration. Region III, Indianapolis, Ind., January 1938, pp. 40-43.

107/ Data from an unpublished study made in Texas in 1938 by the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, the Works Progress Administration, and the Farm Security Administration.

c. Sugar beet areas

Housing conditions in the sugar beet areas are likewise very unsatisfactory.

"Forty-seven percent of the families interviewed at their residences were found to be living in quarters of not more than 2 rooms and only 29 percent lived in as many as 4 rooms. Some families ~~shared~~ their few rooms with 1 or 2 other families during the working season. Since the rooms of the typical 2-room shack or adobe houses were not more than about 12 feet square there was usually no space for more than 2 beds. The large families would lay mattresses on the floor at night for the children to sleep on, and in the daytime stack these extra mattresses on top of the 1 or 2 bedsteads. It was customary to many families for more than 2 people to sleep together in 1 bed or on 1 mattress, and this was a particularly trying situation when there was illness in the family. In nearly two-fifths of the families interviewed at their residences there were 3 or more persons to a room, and in two-thirds there were 2 or more to a room. Twenty-five families (4 percent of those reporting) actually had 6 or more persons to a room and a few had 10 persons to a room. There were 3 or more persons to a room in fifty-two percent of the migratory families interviewed at their beet-season residence, whereas the corresponding proportion for the non-migratory families were 35 percent." 108/

A report by the Secretary of Labor 109/ states:

"Living quarters for seasonal agricultural laborers are to a large extent furnished by the growers. This is general throughout the Southwest, West, and Northwest in the areas in which large numbers of seasonal laborers are employed. The housing furnished by the growers has long been a subject of discussion and concern. The standards of the agricultural labor camps (in California) have declined steeply in the last years notwithstanding

108/ Johnson, Elizabeth S., Welfare of Families of Sugar Beet Laborers, U. S. Department of Labor, Children's Bureau, Bureau Publication No. 247, Washington, D. C. 1939, pp. 76-77.

109/ U. S. Department of Labor, Migration of Workers. Preliminary Report of the Secretary of Labor to 75th Congress, First Session, pursuant to S. Res. 298 (74th Congress), Washington, D. C. 1938, pp. 137-138.

their being subject to the inspection of the State Commission of Immigration and Housing. In the words of the report of the National Labor Board, in 1934, speaking of Imperial Valley:

'We found filth, squalor, an entire absence of sanitation, and a crowding of human beings into totally inadequate tents or crude structures built of boards, weeds, and anything that was found at hand to give a pitiful semblance of a home at its worst.'.....

At a tent camp visited by the Children's Bureau representative in an extensive cotton area of Arizona (near Phoenix) there were 18 tents arranged in a square with a vacant space in the center. This space was used for parking cars, and apparently for piling up refuse, as it was littered with old boxes and rubbish at the time of the visit. The tents were located only a few feet off the highway and an irrigation ditch ran along one side of the camp. There were no screens for the tents. A small two-lid wood stove was furnished for each tent. The rest of the furnishings had to be supplied by the workers. Only a few of the workers had beds. Most of them slept on blankets on the ground or made pallets from long grass hay gathered near by. In practically none of the tents visited were there chairs, wooden boxes being used for this purpose. Most of them had a table of some description and makeshift shelves and cupboards."

2. Regulation of Farm Workers' Housing

In 1931, President Hoover's Committee on Farm and Village Housing of the Conference on Home Building and Ownership, found that conditions approached a satisfactory level only when State authorities assumed some responsibility in the matter.

Thirteen States have regulations covering at least some labor camps, 110/ but probably not all of these apply to camps for farm laborers.

In California, New York, and Pennsylvania, labor camps operated by employers are under the jurisdiction of the State departments of labor. In New York, however, a detailed code is in force only

110/ Arkansas, California, Delaware, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin.

for cannery camps. In Pennsylvania regulations issued by the Industrial Board apply to labor camps in general. The Division of Immigration and Housing of the California Department of Industrial Relations has jurisdiction over all labor camps and over auto and trailer camps in unincorporated areas, but not over squatter camps.

The codes which have been issued in these States require that bunkhouses, tents, or other sleeping and living quarters be constructed to meet certain general standards; that eating and cooking quarters be kept in a clean and sanitary condition with screened openings; that convenient and suitable bathing facilities and toilet facilities be provided; that garbage and refuse disposal, bedding, and ventilation satisfy stated requirements. Persistent efforts over a considerable period of time have brought improvements in all three States.

3. Federal Housing for Agricultural Workers

The general failure of the States to provide decent housing created a need that has been met in part by a federal agency, the Farm Security Administration. The FSA has developed a two-fold housing program: (1) camps for migratory seasonal workers, and (2) "Labor Homes".

Camps for Migratory Seasonal Workers

In 1935 construction was started on the first migratory labor camps of the FSA, at Marysville and at Arvin, California; the former opened in December of that year.

Each camp provided facilities to accommodate about 100 families. These facilities included: tent platforms grouped about toilet, laundry, and bathing facilities; a small building for the isolation of workers afflicted with communicable diseases; a warehouse; and a home for the manager.

The operation of the camps brought to light the complete isolation of the migratory workers from normal community and social relations. Accordingly, additions were made to the original physical layout so as to contribute to a healthy social life. Community buildings were provided so that campers might hold assemblies and recreational meetings. In each camp clinic facilities were built so public health authorities might operate efficiently.

Camp design and construction has become fairly standardized during the past seven years. The typical camp is laid out in streets, with an entrance facing the main route of travel.

Nearby is the office and residence of the camp manager. In the center of the camp stands a utility building with hot and cold running water, shower baths, laundry and ironing rooms. Every family has access to sanitary toilet facilities.

Attached to some camps are small farm plots on which are produced subsistence crops to augment the variety of foods available to the campers. These plots are usually operated under the direction of the camp manager, the produce being sold on a cooperative basis to the occupants.

Management of FSA Camps

Management of the camps is carried on in as democratic a manner as possible. The campers elect a central camp committee which serves as the governing body, represents them in all relationships with the manager and establishes such local rules as are necessary to maintain harmony. All problems of discipline and all controversies are taken care of by this committee. The camps are subject to local laws and to police and health inspection by accredited officers, but they are not subject to entry by "vigilantes" or deputies acting beyond the limits of the law. Camp managers are appointees of the United States Government and are responsible for the operation of the camps. To them are referred for final determination all decisions and recommendations of the camp committee.

Care of Children

One of the problems of migratory agricultural workers' families is that of the care of younger children during working hours. Ordinarily the only choice is between taking them into the fields and leaving them alone in the roadside camp or "jungle". In a number of Farm Security Administration camps nursery schools have been established. These operate from nine in the morning to mid-afternoon 5 days a week, under the direction of trained nursery school teachers assigned by the WPA, and assisted by young people in training from the National Youth Administration. The daily program in the schools includes a health check by the camp nurse, a hot lunch at noon-day, guided play, and rest periods. In one of the Florida camps there are arrangements for the children to sleep at the school, at least for the early hours of the night, since the workday in the vegetable fields often lasts until 10 o'clock in the evening.

Regular school attendance by older children is difficult to arrange, even in the government camps, since the necessity of moving from place to place remains. But at each camp

efforts have been made to work out arrangements with local school authorities so that these handicaps may be reduced to a minimum.

FSA Camps and Job Placement

The migratory labor camps are located at terminals on the main routes of migration between crop areas. Those now in operation on the West Coast constitute a chain, the activities of which are closely coordinated.

In Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Texas, where the State Employment Services are well established, the FSA camps make use of their information. An Employment Service man operates in each camp as farm placement agent. On entering the camp, migrants register with the agent, and in this way every effort is made to use to best advantage the available employment, opportunities. Working relationships between the FSA and the State Employment Service in California, Arizona, and the states of the Eastern Seaboard were developed for the 1942 season.

FSA Mobile Camps

As a part of the FSA camp program, 23 mobile camps have been constructed. These are portable units designed for use in establishing camps in areas where work is available only for short periods. After the season is over, the camp is dismantled and moved to another area. During the 1941 season, these 23 mobile units served 47 areas. The units are equipped with portable power, water and bathing units, offices and clinics built into trailers, and portable tent platforms. These camps, accompanied by management personnel, are set up each season on a chain of leased sites.

FSA Labor Homes Program

Another phase of the FSA farm labor program is the attempt to stabilize some of the migrant families by providing cottages, with garden plots attached. Thus the family acquires a base from which the older members, during certain seasons of the year, may go out to seek work, possibly at some distance. Rentals for labor homes vary somewhat in different parts of the country. Monthly rentals range from \$3 in Missouri to between \$5 and \$9 in Florida, Oregon, Texas, Washington, and California.

As opportunities present themselves, some of the families occupying "labor homes" are assisted to obtain farms on which they can establish themselves with the aid of rehabilitation loans.

As of January 1, 1942, there were 35 permanent and 23 mobile camps in operation. These 58 camps are capable of serving 13,674 families at any one time. Since harvest peaks occur at different times in different parts of the country, it is not expected that all camps will be fully occupied at all times. Because of the constant movement in and out of camps, however, it is estimated that the number of persons benefiting from use of FSA camps facilities in the course of a season is about two and one-half times the total capacity at any one time.

Funds were provided for the construction during 1942 of additional facilities to house approximately 7,000 families. This included 16 additional standard camps and 27 mobile camps. Without new units completed there would be a total of 101 migratory labor camps capable of serving 20,607 families at one time. Additional camps are also under consideration.

Value and Prospects of FSA Camp Program

While the sponsors of this camp program do not claim for it any efficacy other than that of a palliative, it is clear that during a period of acute maladjustment of conditions in the seasonal labor market, it is a palliative of importance. To sense how important, one need only visit an FSA camp, such as that at Tulare, and then for purposes of comparison spend a time at the extensive "shanty town" area near Farmersville, Calif. At the present time the migratory camp program reaches hardly 10 percent of those who are in need of its aid. But as an example of what can be done and of the response of migrants to the effort to do it, the camps have exerted much influence upon communities and large-scale agricultural undertakings. It is hoped that the program can be expanded to assist in most effective use of the available labor supply, which is so vital during this period of national emergency.

E. FOOD AND SUBSISTENCE

Data on food and subsistence resources on farm laborers are scanty. Most of the available information relates to wage hands and sharecroppers of the South, of whom it can be said without exaggeration that no other large rural group in the

United States has so low a standard of diet. The usual fare is meat (mostly fat pork), meal, and molasses. Garden products are rare.

A study of 141 farm wage worker families in the Arkansas River Valley 111/ showed that the average value of family living produced on the farm was \$106, which was supplemented by \$293 cash wages. Sharecroppers in the Arkansas River Valley produced \$152 worth of family living items and earned \$296 of additional cash income.

Another Arkansas study of 423 Arkansas wage-labor and share-cropper families found that home-use products amounted to \$129 per family; \$58 of which was for house and fuel; \$18 for garden and other vegetables; \$50 for livestock and livestock products; and \$3 for miscellaneous items. Most studies indicate that over one-half and frequently two-thirds of all cropper expenditures are for the purchase of food, such as it is. The remainder of their expenditures must pay for the clothing, health, education, and other requirements of the families. 112/

Under these circumstances hygiene and medical care are practically impossible, and victims of ill health are forced to resort to home and patent remedies. Little of the income can be spent on clothing. The tenant farmer, his debts to his landlord often absorbing all his cash income, pleads for a little money, at least enough to buy his wife a dress. Each year in the Black Belt thousands of farm mothers chop cotton and pick cotton and then fail to get a new cotton dress at the end of the year. The clothes for the children in many of the families are strikingly inadequate. 113/

111/ Leonard, O. E. and Loomis, C. P. A Study of Mobility and Levels of Living Among Negro Sharecroppers and Wage Laborer Families of the Arkansas River Valley. Farm Population and Rural Welfare Activities, Vol. XIII, No. 2, April 15, 1939, p. 9.

112/ Barton, Glen T., and McNeely, J. G. Recent Changes in Farm Labor Organization in Three Arkansas Plantation Counties, Preliminary report, Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station, Fayetteville, September, 1939, pp. 21, 29-31.

113/ Taylor, Carl C., Wheeler, Helen W., and Kirkpatrick, E. L. Disadvantaged Classes in American Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture Social Research Report No. VIII, Washington, D. C., April 1938, p. 117.

F. HEALTH

Where such conditions prevail it is small wonder that wage hands and croppers are often ill-clothed, undernourished, unhealthy, and illiterate. "The effects of low income with attendant poor housing and meager diet are evident when measures of health are applied to the cotton tenant household. The lack of screening facilities the spread of malaria; the primitive water supply and sanitary facilities contribute to typhoid epidemics. The lack of balance in the diet is a major factor in the incidence of pellagra, a disease almost entirely confined to the poor classes in the South. Inadequate food also contributes to digestive disorders." 114/

Health needs of farm laborers are bound up with health needs of the farm family and the rural community as a whole. Only in the case of certain special groups, such as the seasonal workers drawn from other areas, is there need for special measures other than those which should be undertaken for the benefit of low-income farm families generally. The regular farm hands and the seasonal workers who are local residents stand to gain no less than the farm families from the extension of rural public health services, and the growth of rural medical centers and hospital facilities.

1. Relationship Between Health and Housing

Problems of housing and health can hardly be separated. In Kern County, Calif., for example, a serious health situation arose in 1937 because of the large numbers of migrants living in so-called "squatter camps, with shelter of the most primitive sort, lacking proper facilities for sanitation. A vigorous campaign for the elimination of those camps was carried out. The result was twofold, according to a report of the Kern County Health Department issued on July 1, 1939. On the one hand, there was a development, in the more remote areas, of "ranch" accommodations for workers—a tent camp for newcomers, a "cotton-shack" camp for less recent arrivals and some two or three room houses for more permanent workers. On the other hand—in the ranch districts adjacent to Arvin, Shafter, Delano, and several other towns, as well as in the two new communities, Lamont and Woodpatch--there was a heavy concentration of low-income workers. In the City of Bakersfield there were several new subdivisions occupied almost entirely by people from Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, and Missouri. Some of these communities had no satisfactory water supply, drainage systems, or means of sewage disposal. The large squatter camps had disappeared—but in their stead appeared rural and suburban slums.

114/ Woofter, T. J., Jr., et al., Landlord and Tenant on the Cotton Plantation, Research Monograph V, Works Progress Administration, Washington, D. C., 1936, p. 105.

Under such conditions the promotion of community health means, first of all, the promotion of low cost, soundly financed housing programs. As the report above referred to points out, the people in these rural slums are anxious enough to cooperate with the sanitation inspector, and to learn from the health department nutritionist the selection and preparation of healthful and economical foods. But development of health consciousness among these families will not suffice until it is possible for individuals, or cooperative groups, to finance the building of low cost, durable houses with proper water supply, sewage disposal, and drainage.

2. Medical Aid for Migratory Farm Workers

No general program has been initiated in the United States to meet the health and medical aid requirements of hired farm workers and members of their families, who, because of their low income status, cannot avail themselves of other facilities. But because of the special situation and the acute nature of the needs existing among the migratory workers in California, Arizona, Texas, Florida, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, the Farm Security Administration has been instrumental in launching a health program among the farm workers in these States.

With the beginning of the great influx of migrants into these areas in 1934 and 1935, the problem of bad health; already serious, became even more acute. Disease was common among the people uprooted from relatively sheltered modes of living forced to live in trailers, woodside camps, and "jungles". It was soon discovered that special health deficiencies developed as a result of the economic destitution, the living conditions, and the mobility of this group.

The unsanitary living conditions in private migrant camps, which commonly afford only the barest essentials for sanitation, are responsible for a large amount of preventable sickness among members of migrant families. For example, 90 percent of the cases of typhoid reported in California in 1936, occurred among these people.

The Farm Security Administration began its health program among the migratory farm workers in February 1938. The first aid was given in the form of grants to farm laborers' families needing relief, but lacking residence status. During the first four months, 27,800 grants were made in California and Arizona. But there was no way to be sure that grants given for medical service were used for that purpose, and there was no way to guarantee that payment would be made to the physician when he had rendered the service. Moreover, the grant program could not be so controlled as to place the needed emphasis on preventive measures.

The California State Department of Health had been sending doctors, nurses, and social workers to follow the movements of the migrants and to vaccinate and inoculate from 60,000 to 70,000 families every year; and the State Department of Immigration and Housing had been sending inspectors to visit private camps and issuing warnings to owners of properties where sanitary conditions are found to be below State standards. The great influx of migrants overtaxed the staff of this agency and in the long periods between the visits of inspectors, sanitary conditions in the private camps often became so bad as to constitute a menace to public health. Furthermore, in the rush of a harvest season, the condemnation of the worst camps and the wholesale evictions from the most unsanitary sites did little to improve health conditions, for wherever the army of homeless migrants settled the conditions from which they had come were soon reproduced.

FSA Medical Program. In order to establish more effective health control and medical-care facilities for migrants and to assure physicians and hospitals payment for services rendered, the Farm Security Administration in March 1938, with the cooperation of the California Medical Association, the State Department of Health, and the State Relief Administration, formed the Agricultural Workers' Health and Medical Association (AWHMA) incorporated under State laws. Each of these agencies has a representative on the Board of Directors of this non-profit association. Clinics were set up and administered by the Association with funds supplied by the Farm Security Administration. The Association has been expanded to include Arizona.

The FSA medical-care program is no longer confined to California and Arizona although most of this work has been done in these two States. By January 1, 1942, 35 standard camps and 23 mobile camps were in operation in California, Arizona, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Texas, and Florida. Each standard camp has a health center with a public health nurse in charge and an isolation unit for contagious diseases. Each of the larger mobile units has a mobile clinic with a nurse in attendance. The various State health departments assist in preventive and immunization work.

By June 1941, there were 9 clinics in California and 7 in Arizona. Fifteen other emergency clinics or referral offices had been set up in the two States at points of migratory concentration. A migrant may apply for membership in the association. When approved, he is given a card, good for 1 year, entitling him and his family to receive the care of the local physicians (who serve in rotation at the clinics) or to care on a referral basis. In the latter case he may choose from a panel of participating doctors and dentists. Services include surgical and other specialist care, X-rays and other diagnostic services, prescription drugs, hospitalization, and limited dental care.

During the fiscal year, 1940-41, the AWHMA reported 118,309 clinic visits, 41,951 referral cases, and 11,394 cases of hospitalization. The clinic visits cost the Association \$14.44 per visit. Cases referred to physicians and dentists averaged \$11.18 per case, and hospitalization averaged \$37.39 per case. A total of \$1,431,242 was spent during the year. Physician and hospital expenses accounted for the largest expenditures with a total of \$310 out of every thousand spent being paid to the former and \$298 to the latter. Another \$114 went to the clinics, \$18 to dentists, and \$5 to nurses. Drugs accounted for \$35, miscellaneous expenditures for \$11, and operating and administrative costs for \$209 of every thousand dollars spent.

Because of a lack of suitable hospital facilities at Eleven Mile Corner in Arizona, the Association established a 55-bed convalescent home there which reported, during its first 5 months of operation, 455 persons hospitalized, with a total of 2,678 days of hospital care provided.

Plans are under consideration for the establishment of similar centers at Fresno, Calif. and in the Okeechobee region in Florida.

Programs administered by the FSA in cooperation with the local and State health authorities have been organized for Florida, Texas, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. ^{115/} These latter programs differ from that of the Agricultural Workers' Health and Medical Association of California and Arizona in that the clinics are located in the migratory camps. Consequently medical aid is readily available only to occupants of the camps and to migrants in the surrounding vicinity. As the programs develop, however, the scope of their operations will be expanded.

The details of the programs vary in each region, though the main outline is similar. The migrant population in Florida, for instance, is fairly stable, making possible some emphasis on preventive and corrective care. All persons registered in the camps are expected to undergo physical examinations. An attempt is made to correct physical disabilities, to encourage proper prenatal, delivery, and post-natal care, to give immediate treatment for venereal disease and to provide other necessary medical, dental, and hospital care. Local physicians hold daily sessions in the camp clinics and are on call for emergencies. Owing to a lack of qualified doctors in the areas surrounding the camps, cases are not referred to outside physicians.

^{115/} In Florida, the Migratory Labor Health Association; in Texas, the Texas Farm Laborers Health Association; and in Oregon, Washington and Idaho, the Agricultural Workers' Health Association.

In the Pacific Northwest region and Texas, where the migrant populations are continually on the move, the camp programs cannot hope to engage in anything more than emergency care. In these areas local physicians hold regular session in the camp clinics. Cases needing special attention are referred to other physicians, surgeons, and nearby hospitals. Actually, the program in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho had only been in operation since July 1, 1941. (During the preceding year medical care was extended through the direct grant system to migrant families).

Figures for the medical aid programs in these latter areas do not cover a year's period. However, where comparable, the costs are similar to those experienced in California and Arizona. A considerable expansion of the program is contemplated for the present year. School lunches and nursery meals are provided as part of the various medical aid programs.

Although the migrant workers are obligated to repay the cost of services "if so requested," their economic status in most cases precludes any possibility of repayment, but some workers have been able to repay a few dollars.

Analysis of the cases treated indicates that many of them suffered from an accumulation of chronic ailments long neglected because of lack of the wherewithal to pay for medical services. The operation of the various medical aid associations shows that migrant farm workers' families without money to pay doctors' bills will more readily apply for aid to a public agency set up for the purpose than to a private physician.

When measured in relation to the needs, the present medical program is inadequate. It should be expanded to preserve the health and usefulness of other thousands of workers, and to prevent the spread of epidemics.

PART THREE

I. THE FARM LABOR MARKET

A. MEN AND JOBS

1. Hiring Practices

A lack of efficient procedures for bringing together workers and jobs characterizes the farm labor market. The haphazard methods in operation in this field reflect factors which have already been discussed—the oversupply of farm workers and their lack of organization. These haphazard methods also contribute to the basic difficulties of hired farm workers: low earnings, intermittent employment, and consequent low levels of living. The characteristically wasteful employment practices of the farm labor market are thus part of a vicious circle of disorganization; "disorganization permits them and, in so permitting, becomes accentuated." 116/

The following discussion of hiring practices applies primarily to the hiring of seasonal workers, since the most difficult hiring problems in agriculture relate to seasonal employment.

An excellent start was made in developing methods of farm placement during the war period, 1917-18, and such methods were advocated in the twenties by such experienced students of farm employment as Professor D.D. Leschier of Wisconsin. Nevertheless, although the farm placement work of the U. S. Bureau of Employment Security is expanding rapidly, personal methods of securing work and of securing workers are still prevalent.

A farmer puts up a sign; he advertises in the paper or over the radio, or through the filling station men; or he goes with a truck to the labor quarter in town. Sometimes he does these things through an agent or a growers' committee. Sometimes he turns the whole matter over to a contractor or padrone.

In any case, his sole concern is to secure an abundance of labor to apply for work; if there is much more labor than is needed, so much the better, for he will be safe from having to pay high wages. The laborer on the other hand, at the very same time may be anxiously searching for work, relying on personal inquiry, a chance handbill, or the well-known "grapevine," usually quite uncritical of the source of information and unsuspecting that the "grapevine telegraph" may lead him to an area where there is a hopeless surplus of labor.

The results of numerous surveys indicate that personal, informal ways of bringing together workers and jobs predominate in the farm labor market. In Karnes County, Texas, in 1936, 92.9 percent of the operators interviewed said they engaged in an active search for farm laborers when they needed them. 117/ In the same county, 89.5 percent of the workers employed stated that they found their jobs through personal search. Eight percent of the remainder said they secured their jobs through a friend, and less than 1 percent (.6 percent) said they found their jobs as a result of the operator's search for labor.

A similar situation was reported for Wayne County, Pennsylvania, in the same year. 118/ Four out of five (80.8 percent) of the workers interviewed reported they had secured their jobs by personal search, while nearly nine out of ten (88.3 percent) of the operators stated that they sought out workers, themselves, when they needed labor. In fact, 71.4 percent of 2,200 workers (who responded to eleven studies in as many States) stated they found their jobs by their own efforts or through the activities of a friend. At the same time, 75.1 percent of the 1,477 employers who responded stated they engaged in personal search for labor. In 1935, 967 of 1,220 jobs (79.3 percent) secured by 252 transient workers in the Yakima Valley 119/ were located by workers inquiring at the place of employment. The proportion for resident workers was practically the same.

Ten farm-wage-worker surveys undertaken by the Farm Security Administration in 1940 corroborate the findings of these earlier studies. Questioned on the way in which they found their current jobs, only 1.3 percent of the responding workers said that they had used public employment services. 120/ Nearly three-tenths of them indicated they had secured their employment through direct or indirect farmer solicitation—solicitation by farmer, or his agent, newspaper advertisements, or labor contractors. The rest of the workers indicated that their employment resulted from their own initiative.

117/ Vasey, Tom, and Folsom, J. C., Survey of Agricultural Labor Conditions in Karnes County, Texas, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., November 1937, p. 14.

118/ Vasey, Tom, and Folsom, J. C., Survey of Agricultural Labor Conditions in Wayne County, Pennsylvania, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, 1937, p. 10.

119/ Landis, Paul H. and Brooks, Melvin S., Farm Labor in the Yakima Valley, Washington, Agricultural Experiment Station, State College of Washington, Bulletin No. 343, p. 45.

120/ A total of 2,312 farm wage workers responded to this question.

The very informality of employment practices in the farm labor market, however, leads to ambiguity of responses in schedule surveys. For example, in the Karnes County survey mentioned above, the great majority of the farm operators said that they actively sought their workers. At the same time, the great majority of the workers said that they found their jobs through personal search. All this bears witness to the same situation: an absence of systematic methods of farm employment.

Recruiting practices of various kinds are often used in combination. In Arizona, for example, the Farm Bureau Federation sponsors the Farm Labor Service which carries on an extensive recruiting campaign on behalf of growers in the intensive cotton-growing districts of Maricopa and Pinal Counties. In the fall of 1937, advertisements for cotton pickers and news releases describing the demand for workers, the advantages of Arizona climate and the favorable living conditions were carried in newspapers in Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Southern California. In addition, agents left word at pool rooms, lunch rooms, road stands, and filling stations that cotton pickers were wanted. These activities were augmented by paid radio announcements.

In addition to the activities of the Farm Labor Service in 1937 Arizona growers put up signs along the road, advertising for cotton pickers, and occasionally went into neighboring States with trucks to recruit workers. Many truck loads of people were also brought west by independent Arizona truck owners who recruited in Oklahoma. Sometimes these truck owners collected fees ranging from \$10 to \$20 a head for adults, and \$5 for children. At other times they arranged with the growers to supply workers and were paid a per capita fee which the growers subsequently deducted from the workers' earnings.

It is not, however, necessary to recruit actively all, or even a large part, of the seasonal farm labor force for many work locations. Such a situation is that of Berrien County, Mich., where, it is estimated, some 10,000 migrant workers are annually employed. Prior to 1941, the farmer-employers of Berrien County did not find it necessary to solicit workers for their increasingly large summer harvests. A stream of migration annually brought workers to their farms. Behind this stream were the pressures of depression and drought distress, and a chance act which gave it direction.

"This attraction to Berrien County can be explained very largely by publicity the county received in Arkansas in 1931. At that time many people in Arkansas were suffering seriously from the effects of the severe crop failure of the 1930 season. Citizens of Berrien County undertook the task of alleviating this suffering by collecting and shipping to Arkansas truck loads of food, clothing, and other necessities. This gesture of good-neighborliness

was widely publicized in Arkansas. Berrien County, Michigan, became to many people in that region of the South an oasis toward which they turned their conveyances when dislodged from their land. A small initial migration was sufficient to stimulate a large movement. Reports of high wages filtered back by letter and by word-of-mouth. Reports of earnings of \$5 and \$6 a day picking cherries or peaches failed to mention that these earnings were made on special days which were few in number. The movement grew steadily throughout the decade." 121/

Started originally, perhaps, by rumor or chance discovery of employment, and developed by repeated experience, these habitual farm-worker migrations constitute one of the major mechanisms for bringing workers to seasonal farm jobs. Though the initiative in such cases comes from the worker, the lack of information or alternative experience often results in an oversupply of farm-workers at particular job locations. A paper published in the Congressional hearings on interstate migration described the effect of uncontrolled and, for the most part, unsolicited migration to Berrien County:

"It is becoming increasingly common to place large numbers of workers in the field for a few hours rather than turn some away and permit the balance to work regularly. This situation works a hardship on the workers because their wages are very small for a day's work. Under these circumstances there is no (sic) oversupply of labor, and the more workers that are available the better it pleased the producer. At times when there is a large supply of labor because of increased migration or a partial crop, these conditions have an effect on the prices that are paid. Naturally when there are two or three workers where only one can be used, these workers compete for the job, and wages can be driven down to very low levels." 122/

While worker initiative is a factor in bringing workers to agricultural jobs, farmer-employers seldom rely entirely upon the unsolicited, yet expected, appearance of workers.

Curbstone Labor Markets

In many cities near truck and fruit areas, certain locations have come to be accepted as hiring places for workers. Usually these are vacant lots or city squares where the growers' trucks can load and unload. As the workers are recruited, they board the trucks and are transported directly to the field.

121/ 77th Congress, 1st Session, House, Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration, Part 19, Detroit Hearings, p 7926.
122/ Tolan Committee, op cit, Chicago Hearings, Part 3, p. 1243.

In the summer of 1938 such a market was observed in Trenton, N. J., where hundreds of Negro workers were recruited each day. Another was observed in Millville, N. J., where workers, most of whom were white, were recruited to harvest the vegetable crops on nearby farms. Apparently no bargaining regarding the wages took place, the growers or their agents simply announcing the hourly or piece-work rate in effect.

Some of these labor markets, though not formally designated and under no community control, have come to be accepted community institutions. Some take on certain aspects of a labor auction. In the so-called "business section" of the Negro quarter in Belle Glade, Fla., (in the heart of the Okeechobee vegetable-growing area) each morning between 6 and 7:30 o'clock during the green bean season appear 10 to 50 trucks belonging to growers in search of pickers. Each grower is represented by an agent, usually a Negro, whose function it is to recruit at the lowest piece-work rate possible, a sufficient labor force to meet the day's demand. Milling about these trucks are from 1,000 to 3,000 field hands who are seeking work at the highest rate obtainable.

The growers' agents harangue the crowd through megaphones or through their cupped hands, stating whether it is a first or second or late picking, giving the length of rows and condition of the crop as well as the piece-work rate offered. At first the workers appear to be indifferent. Sometimes when the operators are known to be under the necessity of harvesting their crop immediately, the workers by holding back can force a slight increase in the piece-work rate.

At the end of the first half-hour the trucks begin to load up and in another 20 minutes the situation changes so that the competition for workers gives way to a competition for jobs. When the trucks are finally loaded to capacity, which often means a load of from 50 to 80 persons, they drive off to the grower's field where each worker is assigned his row. At the end of the day he is paid off in cash and the next morning he goes through the same process of locating his day's work. Seldom do the employers make any effort to hold their pickers from one day to the next, so the process of recruiting an entire force is gone through each day during the season.

No comment is necessary to make clear what a far cry this is from the employment procedure of the operator of a family farm when he engages his "hired man."

Advertising for Help

Other recruiting mechanisms are necessary when the labor supply is separated from the demand for it, either by geographic or racial-linguistic barriers. Newspaper advertisements, inspired newspaper stories, radio announcements, and other

means of making known the demand for labor comprise one type of recruiting. These techniques have the common characteristic of uncontrolled broadcasting. They often lead to the appearance of excessive labor supply at advertised points of demand.

These techniques and their resultant situation work to the advantage of the agricultural employer. In a report submitted to the Congressional committee investigating interstate migration, The Texas State Employment Service stated:

Local organizations, such as chambers of commerce, local and state newspapers, labor and emigrant agents, flashed notices and ads and bulletins calling for labor or promising labor to demanding farmers. Some farmers, needing perhaps from 50 to 100 workers, would cry loudly for 1,000 merely to assure themselves an abundant supply from which to pick and choose. The employer's interest in a plentiful labor supply is, obviously, twofold. He desires a nobile labor reserve large enough to handle his peak operations; he desires, equally, a supply that must accept low wages, long hours, and poor working conditions. With a labor market entirely unorganized, the farmer-employer had to depend upon deliberately scattered rumors and advertising to achieve his two desires. 123/

2. The Labor Contractor

Frequently the farm operator, to be relieved of the responsibility of securing his seasonal hands, makes an agreement with a labor contractor who undertakes to supply, either for a lump sum or on a per capita basis, the number of workers required. In some of the older sections of the country this system has long been in vogue. The cranberries in the bogs of New Jersey, eastern Long Island, and Cape Cod have long been picked by gangs recruited by the "padrones" from the foreign-speaking people of the nearby metropolitan centers. For work in the hop yards of the Pacific Northwest, Indians 124/ are recruited through the chief of the tribe. Mexican workers for the truck fields of Alameda and Santa Clara Counties, California, are secured by contract, also Filipino labor for the lettuce fields of the Salinas Valley and the asparagus fields of the Sacramento Delta.

123/ Tolan Committee, op cit, Oklahoma City Hearings, Part 5, p. 1809.

124/ Reuss, Carl F., Landis, Paul H., and Wakefield, Richard: Migratory Labor in the Hop Industry on the Pacific Coast, Washington Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 363, p. 30.

In the western cotton sections, the labor contractor furnishes a truck and recruits a gang of laborers. He transports them, presumably free of charge, after the cotton and fruit harvesting season. He acts as recruiting agent, contact man, and business agent for the laborers and takes the responsibility of collecting the laborers' earnings from the farmer and of weighing and hauling the cotton or truck crops. In Texas, the contractor receives from the workers from 5 to 10 cents for each hundred pounds of cotton picked, and from the farmer, about \$1.50 per bale. 125/

For picking strawberries in the Florida West Coast area, labor contractors supply gangs of Negroes recruited in Sarasota, Tampa, and Fort Meyer. For this same crop in southeastern North Carolina, Negro laborers are recruited in Wilmington, N. C., and as far away as Greensboro and Charlotte. In this case, the labor contractor does nothing more than recruit the workers, charging the growers from 50 cents to \$1 a head for transportation. Frequently nothing in the agreement specifies how the workers are to get back to their homes. At the end of the strawberry season these same workers are often picked up by other contractors who take them to the potato-growing areas of the Coastal Plains, or to the melon fields and peach orchards of the sandhills region of North Carolina.

Labor contractors also operate at an advantage where there is a geographic barrier between sources of labor supply and labor demand. At times this barrier may be the wide distances between crop areas, as in Texas and in California. Sometimes it may be a congested area through which it is difficult for workers to move independently. Because the contractor can take truck loads of workers by ferry from Norfolk, Va., to the Virginia Peninsula for the potato harvest, he is in an advantageous position since it would cost several dollars for the worker to go over in his own car. A somewhat similar situation exists in southern New Jersey, accessible from the South only by ferry or by a circuitous route involving miles of extra travel and payment of tolls, and in Eastern Long Island and on Cape Cod.

The abuses of the system spring from the lack of definite arrangements about transportation charges. When the settlement is made, the worker is usually far from home, often with his family and at the mercy of the contractor for return transportation. It is not unusual for disclosure of additional charges and deductions from wages to be made by the contractor at this time.

125/ Hamilton, C. Horace, The Social Effects of Recent Trends in Mechanization of Agriculture, Progress Report 579, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, December 1938, p. 10. (mimeographed)

Another evil arises from the practice of the contractors of making cash advances to unemployed workers in slack periods, with the understanding that they will work in his gangs during the next season. The contractor deducts the loans from the wages paid him by the farmer, together with interest and other charges. This loan business can be quite remunerative to the contractor. Consequently he often makes loans to more people than those for whom he has steady jobs. Since his interest is primarily in getting for his people only enough work to pay back their debts to him, he puts more people to work than the job would normally require, thus reducing the period of employment per worker.

Frequently, both the workers and communities suffer as a result of the fly-by-night operations of some contractors. Ordinarily the contractors' obligations are fulfilled when they have recruited and delivered to the operator the labor force agreed upon. If, due to weather or market conditions, the work does not materialize, the workers are left stranded in a strange community.

The system, moreover, operates to the disadvantage of laborers resident in the locality, who are deprived of the employment which, reasonably, ought to be theirs.

Concerning some of the abuses of the labor-contractor system, the Secretary of Labor, testifying before the House Committee Investigating Migration of Destitute Citizens, stated:

"Migratory workers are often preyed upon by unscrupulous labor contractors who are nowhere, as yet, subject to any effective regulations. Whole families may be brought long distances from homes by these contractors and forced to remain even under intolerable conditions, because the contractor has advanced the money for transportation and food, or because the worker will lose his season's earnings, if he goes back, assuming he can finance the return journey. Incidentally, farmers, too, are often victims of the contractors' practice of labor stealing.

"The transportation facilities provided for migratory workers by labor contractors and others, for which fares are collected, are in many cases not only disgraceful but dangerous to the migrants themselves and to others on the highways. Much of the transportation concerning which we have received complaints is in overcrowded, open trucks, making long journeys, crossing one or more State lines. Some of it is intrastate. The collision in Texas between a railroad train and a truck

carrying 44 farm workers, the youngest being 7 years old, is a striking illustration of the prevalent abuses. This particular accident did not come under the jurisdiction of the Interstate Commerce Commission, but many trucks similarly loaded are known to operate in interstate commerce." 126/

The Need for Regulation. The record of the hearings of the Committee is replete with examples of useless migration stimulated by the spreading of misinformation with regard to the existence of jobs; the charging of excessive fees both for transportation and for obtaining jobs for workers; the charging of high prices in stores operated by contractors; the operation of unsanitary and overcrowded housing in order to secure greater profits.

As a result of this investigation, the Committee has recommended that there be established Federal regulation of private employment agencies and labor contractors engaged in interstate commerce.

Although a few States have enacted and have enforced laws which regulate such operations, such practices have not been curbed where the contractor operates in interstate commerce.

A bill was introduced in the 1st session of the 77th Congress (H.R. 5510), which would provide for the registration of employment agencies engaged in interstate commerce. Such registration involves the payment of a fee and the filing of a bond with the Secretary of Labor. The bill prohibited:

- (1) The dissemination of false or misleading information with respect to employment or opportunities for employment.
- (2) The charging of a fee which is in excess of that provided for in a statement filed with the Secretary of Labor. Such fees must be just, reasonable, and non-discriminatory.
- (3) The splitting of fees with employers or associations of employers.

It called for:

- (1) The furnishing of a complete statement to the employee concerning the conditions of employment.

- (2) The furnishing to each employee/a ^{of} statement of the existence of a strike or lockout, if such exists.
- (3) Regulation by the Secretary of Labor of lodging houses or stores serving people seeking employment.

Provision was made for the enforcement of the law, and penalties are listed for all violations of the law.

The enactment of such a bill would eliminate the major evils of labor contracting.

Variants of the labor contractor system of recruitment occur in some localities. In the strawberry areas of Louisiana and North Carolina, for example, labor "runners" are utilized. Labor runners are, in a sense, labor contractors for one crop season each year. In the areas referred to they are usually Negroes living in towns removed from the strawberry areas. During the off-season, a grower keeps in touch with his runner, often strengthening the relation with holiday gifts. When the strawberries are ready to be picked, the grower notifies his runner to assemble a crew of pickers. The runner usually receives a small commission for his services and enjoys a favored position at the work location. He serves as a go-between both prior to and during the harvest.

3. The Employment Committee

In Michigan, the sugar beet growers delegate recruitment to their "employment committee." This committee, on which the sugar beet processing plants are represented, recruits Spanish-American workers from urban centers in New Mexico and Texas. Employees of the sugar companies sometimes go to New Mexico and Western Texas to recruit the necessary labor supply. These agents circulate handbills, put up posters, or directly solicit individual workers. Frequently, railroad expenses or reimbursements for travel by automobile are met, or advanced. Investigation by the Michigan State Department of Labor and Industry in 1938 revealed that labor was recruited from New Mexico and Texas even when unemployment was severe in Michigan.

The methods of bringing together men and jobs in the farm labor market are highly inefficient and socially wasteful. Overlapping efforts of the grower, or his agents, to find labor and the job-seeking activities of the workers themselves create a situation in which controlled use of labor is impossible and consequent hardships for the workers are unavoidable.

In the 1936-37 Report of the Farm Placement Service in Texas, there is cited an illustration of the results of this uncoordinated method of seeking employment. In Lubbock County, Texas, the peak of the cotton-picking season is reached in the latter part of October and in November, and workers begin to move into the area as they finish picking in the other sections. In 1935, by the tenth of October, exaggerated reports of the cotton yield resulted in great numbers of workers pouring into Lubbock from every direction, though the picking had not yet actually begun and the growers were not ready for their labor.

There were no housing facilities and no camping grounds. About the time the great mass of workers reached Lubbock, cold rain set in, leaving hundreds of families, without means of shelter, camping in the open spaces. The situation grew more serious as sickness developed, especially among the small children. No aid was available for them from public services; they were ineligible for relief; and the growers would do nothing for them because they could not go to work until the rain ceased.

The extreme distress among the many workers coming to this area in search of work was alleviated only when the Employment Service arranged with the Salvation Army to find and allocate all available shelter and to open soup kitchens. More than a week elapsed before the rain stopped and it was dry enough for the workers to go into the fields.

B. METHODS OF SUPERVISION OF FARM LABOR

Problems of supervision for farm laborers are varied. For the hired man, the problem of supervision on the farm does not exist. Such supervision as is required is immediate and direct. For the greater part of each working day the employer and the hired man work side by side at the same, or similar, tasks.

Moreover, the farm operator desires a worker to be able to carry on certain phases of the work without supervision. For example, the hired man may have the responsibility of feeding and caring for the workstock while the farm operator reserves for himself the tasks and chores incident to caring for the other livestock. When the labor of the operator and that furnished by the members of his family and his regularly hired help is supplemented by additional labor hired for seasonal work, the supervision may still be direct.

On general farms operated by hired managers, supervision is usually direct, as also on many smaller fruit, truck and dairy farms where more hired workers are likely to be employed than on general farms of comparable size or scale.

However, serious personnel problems are found on the large-scale farms where (as the Census of 1935 showed) even in January a considerable force of hired workers is employed. Here, as in industrial concerns where many workers are gathered under one roof, importance attaches to questions relating to efficiency of management in terms of output, routing and distribution of labor, specialization, hours of work, fatigue, and the effect of all these factors upon employer-employee relationships. At the present time, it is true, many farm managers regard as the essence of good labor management merely the securing of a plentiful supply of labor at the proper periods. For the rest, they are content to divest themselves altogether of management and supervision functions, transferring these to a labor contractor, a padrone, the field man of a sugar company, or the agent of a cooperative growing, packing or shipping association. The result is that the manager thus escapes direct responsibility, not only for the management and supervision in the fields but also for the welfare of the laborers during their work on the farm, and for the effects of their presence in the community.

The work in a large agricultural enterprise can be organized on the basis of division of labor, certain gangs being assigned to specific tasks, or on a unit basis, each gang being held responsible for a complete unit of the enterprise. On some large-scale farms there is a combination of both of these methods. A study of large-scale farms in the corn belt 127/ found that labor gangs under foremen responsible to the general managers of the farms were divided into two groups. Some of the smaller gangs were assigned year-round responsibilities, such as the care of work animals or the swine herd. Other gangs were assigned to various jobs, differing according to the season.

On a large sugar plantation in Florida where 4,200 Negro workers are employed, field foremen are responsible to the general farm manager; each has charge of about 100 men. Responsible to the foremen are gang leaders, each over 7 to 15 men. These gang leaders work with the men and are paid on a piece-work basis, with a small bonus for good production by their gang. Each is responsible for the organization and supervision of his gang in the field. He cannot hire or discharge, but can make recommendations to the superintendent.

On cotton plantations the supervision exercised by the landlord may be general, consisting only of advice to the tenant or cropper in regard to agricultural methods; or the supervision may be very

127/ Munford, D. Curtis, Economic Aspects of Large-Scale Farming in the Corn Belt, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, January 1930. (Unpublished manuscript.)

close. Of 215 plantations studied in 1924,^{128/} 68 percent reported close supervision, 30 percent general supervision, and 2 percent no supervision. On the closely supervised plantations every activity is controlled by the management. A rising bell is rung in the morning and the bell is rung again at the beginning and end of the work day. The riding boss, in charge of 15 to 30 tenants, croppers, and wage hands, gives constant attention to their work. Frequently the owner, or general manager, visits each work site at least once a day. The owner or manager has direct charge of all the varied plantation enterprises, including purchasing, marketing, and credit arrangements. He supervises the accounting office, the store commissary, and the gin. Responsible to him are the overseers of the tenant and cropper farms. These men have charge of the blacksmith shop, the garage, the tractor shop, and the grist mill. Responsible to them are the assistant riders, each with direct responsibility for the work of 20 to 30 croppers. The overseers and their assistants lay out the work each worker or tenant is to perform on a day-by-day basis and direct the work as closely as foremen on construction work or in manufacturing plants direct the work of the men over whom they are placed.

Supervision by Agents of Shippers or Processors. The practice of transferring the functions of labor management from the farm operator to representatives of a shipping or processing concern is common in the fruit and vegetable-growing areas of the country.

In citrus groves much of the picking is done by crews recruited and organized by the packing or canning companies or by the cooperative marketing agencies of the growers. The pickers assemble each day at the packing house rather than at the groves and are organized into crews, each crew composed of a foreman, a loader, a truck driver, and a gang of pickers numbering from 10 to 40. The foreman has supervision over detailed work assignments and over preliminary inspection of the fruit to determine as to its size and ripeness according to standards set by the packing house tester. He may also adjust the piece work rate in the field, depending upon the quantity of fruit of the desired size or color.

In the areas where vegetables are grown for preserving, it is frequently the practice for canning companies to purchase a vegetable crop in the field, in which case supervision of the harvesting operation is assumed by the company.

A type of indirect supervision is prevalent in the sugar-beet-growing areas. Frequently the sugar company, having recruited labor for the grower, does not terminate its relationship to the beet workers when they arrive in the fields. Though direct

^{128/} Brannen, C. O., Relation of Land Tenure to Plantation Organization, United States Department of Agriculture, Bul. 1269, Washington, D. C., 1924, p. 42.

supervision is left to the grower, the company usually requires that its representatives have access to the fields to inspect the growing crops. The enforcement of what the sugar company regards as good farming practice thus may put the grower in the position of a field foreman over his contract laborers, carrying out the instructions of the company. The contracts between the growers and the workers usually stipulate that in the event of any dispute between the parties with respect to the interpretation of the terms of the contract or the amount or character of the work performed, the arbiter shall be the "Agricultural Superintendent" or "Fieldman" of the sugar company.

Supervision by Labor Contractors. The functions of labor contractors in the hiring of farm labor have been discussed. However, contractors also serve as supervisors of work in some areas.

In the California fruit and truck areas, for example, ¹²⁹/the grower makes a contract with a "picker" who provides and supervises a gang of field workers. Usually the grower reserves the right to insist on an adequate force of men, to discharge men whose work is unsatisfactory, and to decide the time and method of harvest. The grower remains the judge of the execution of the contract and has the right to terminate it. The contract specifies the amounts to be paid the contractor, the living quarters to be furnished, and the piece and time wage rates of the workers. Complete payment by the grower is deferred until the end of the season, as a guarantee of fulfillment of the contract.

In the case of Mexican labor employed under the contract system, the contractor usually agrees both to provide the required labor force and to supervise the field work. Sometimes he is on the payroll of the grower as a foreman. Sometimes he agrees to harvest the crop for a flat sum agreed upon in advance; out of this he pays his workers, depending for his profit on the margin between the amount paid the workers and that paid to him for the harvesting of the crop. This profit is sometimes augmented by means of a charge to the workers for their transportation. Sometimes the contractor supplies the labor and supervises the field work, and is paid a percentage on the piece-rate, the actual payments to the workers being made by the operator.

The system generally in use with Filipino labor contractors differs somewhat from that of the Mexicans. The Filipino contractor usually supplies workers on an hourly basis and provides the supervision. He furnishes lodging and board either at his

¹²⁹/ Rowell, Edward J., Unpublished report to Director, Labor Relations Division, Farm Security Administration, on The Background and Problems Affecting Farm Labor in California.

own or at a grower's camp. Where he is not paid wages as a field boss, he depends for his return on his charges to the workers for board. He handles the time sheets and pays the men. In some cases he reserves for himself a percentage of the piece-rate payment, in addition to the charge for board.

In the cotton areas of Texas the supervision of pickers is left entirely to contractors. ^{130/} The contractor, usually a Mexican with a truck, takes responsibility for harvesting an entire crop, weighing and hauling the cotton and collecting the laborers' earnings from the farmers. For these services, the farmer pays him a stipulated sum for each bale of cotton, and the workers pay him a percentage of their piece-work payments.

Although the contract system may operate to the advantage of the farm worker by providing some continuity of employment (because the contractor is able at times to secure jobs better than an individual), the delegation of supervision by the actual employer to his labor contractor is subject to abuses that injure both working and living conditions of farm laborers.

c. FARM PLACEMENT AND STABILIZATION OF EMPLOYMENT

Irregularity and uncertainty of earnings are the particular curse of the workers in the special crop areas where relatively high day or piece rates may be offered for short periods. The causes of this irregularity of employment are to be found partly in the inevitably seasonal character of agriculture, partly in the adoption of crop systems which result in the piling up of seasonal requirements, and partly in the disorganization of the farm labor market which results in the presence in a crop area of an unnecessarily large supply of workers. Thus the measures for promoting continuity of employment fall into two main groups,—(1) those which are intended to help in adjusting the supply of farm labor to the demand for it, and, (2) those which are aimed at flattening out peaks in the demand for labor and making it more uniform.

Of these two sorts of measure, the former has thus far received most attention and has attained the greatest measure of success. The problem of seasonal employment, and the difficulty of keeping the supply of laborers in proper relation to the demand for their services are not peculiar to agriculture; they have appeared, and in varying degree have been overcome, in the construction industry, in longshore work, and elsewhere. In agriculture, because of the scattered character of the work units, the organization of

^{130/} Hamilton, C. Horace, Social Effects of Recent Trends in Mechanization of Agriculture, Progress Report #579, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, College Station, Texas, 1938.

effective employment exchanges is more difficult than in industry, but the difference is only one of degree. As a matter of fact, in certain farm areas of the United States very considerable success has been attained in fitting the right men to the right jobs in proper numbers. In Australia, also, where in some areas conditions are similar to those in the United States and Canada, seasonal farm labor arrangements have been very effectively worked out. Especially noteworthy are the well-managed "traveling gang" systems in the pastoral industry, in grain threshing, fruit harvesting, hay making and ensilage operations, and in scrub clearing.

1. Development of the Farm Placement Service

The United States Farm Placement Service was created by the Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933 as a part of the United States Employment Service. Farm placement supervisors in States using large numbers of farm wage workers advise the respective State employment services concerning placement programs for agricultural workers. The actual farm placement work, however, is performed by the State Employment Services. The financial support for these services comes from grants-in-aid from Social Security Board funds and from funds appropriated under the Wagner-Peyser Act.

The director of the Bureau of Employment Security in the Social Security Board stated the objectives of the farm placement program in the following terms:

"Employment service facilities can also be used effectively to direct the movement of workers who migrate in response to seasonal demands for labor. This is especially true in agriculture where the objective of the service is to meet the needs of both growers and workers and at the same time to avoid unnecessary and fruitless migration. Functioning in the agricultural labor market, and in cooperation with other agencies, the employment service can be a means of stabilizing farm-labor resources, providing a more adequate income to a limited number of qualified workers, eliminating the irresponsible recruiting practices of labor contractors, and providing growers with workers who are experienced in a particular type of crop activity."131/

Prior to 1941 the Farm Placement Service was handicapped by limited funds, few offices, and general indifference on the part of farmer-employers. Under the stress of war conditions,

131/ Tolan Committee, Op Cit., Washington Hearings, testimony of Ewan Clague, p. 3562-3563.

with a fear of farm labor shortage growing, the Farm Placement Service has been expanded and growers have gone to it more frequently with their needs. In addition, national coordination of the program has been advanced by federalization (on January 1, 1942) of the formerly autonomous state offices. Hence the Farm Placement Service is just now beginning to reach a position in which it can accomplish its objectives.

In the records of the Tolson Committee appears an example of the way in which in the past local employment offices have sometimes found it necessary to discard the usual interview and registration procedure, and thus were unable to make and control placements. In his testimony before the Congressional Committee the district manager of the Tennessee Employment Service stated:

"Various truck drivers, both those from the plantations and independent drivers, visit the office, state how many workers they desire to secure, and as fast as possible trucks are loaded and sent out. A referral card, which is an introduction to the employer, is given to the truck driver, and in case of an independent driver who has no particular destination, directions are given to him as to where to take the labor.

"Generally, orders have been sent in in advance by many plantation owners and if none are on hand the telephone is used in calling various plantation owners whom we believe are in need of labor. Orders are secured and information is given to these independent drivers as to where to go. An independent driver is generally paid a commission for hauling labor at the rate of so much a person for transportation charges. He is also generally used by the plantation owner the balance of the day on hauling operations during the day and brings workers back at night.*** Trucks and automobiles of all makes and sizes are lined up for over three blocks on the streets leading to the bridge and also on the side streets. Thousands of workers start gathering at an early hour of the morning and mill about from truck to truck deciding as to where they wish to go and for a couple of hours there is a bustling scene as workers are loaded into the trucks and trucks pull out.

"Quite often a number of trucks are left over and several hundred pickers. The interviewer calls various plantations until he can locate a plantation to send this surplus labor to. In this way, many more workers are placed for the day than would otherwise be." 132/

However, even in the pre-war years, the Farm Placement Service was able to make some progress. The record of the Texas Farm Placement Service was particularly noteworthy. The accomplishments of the Texas organization were summarized in the Tolan Committee's record as follows:

"In 1939 the Texas service made more than 550,000 agricultural placements. According to the statement submitted to the committee by the assistant director of the State employment service, the farm placement service has been careful to verify the authenticity of requisitions for labor. It has rejected or only partially filled requisitions which it believed to be excessive, has attempted to provide fuller employment over the year for the workers it serves, and has given placement preference to workers resident in the vicinity of job opportunities. While these policies have resulted in many instances in the refusal of employers to use the service, and in the use by employers of other devices for the purpose of creating local surpluses of labor, the farm placement service has been successful in gaining a wide degree of acceptance among employers. The increasing number of placements made by the service each year suggests that it is growing in importance and influence in the farm labor market of the State. The service has eliminated evils associated with earlier methods of labor recruiting, and has served workers and employers in reducing the amount of aimless migration and in avoiding, to some extent, local shortages and oversupplies of labor which formerly resulted from the complete lack of organization in the farm labor market of the State." 133/

Past experience would seem to indicate quite definitely that grower acceptance of the Farm Placement Service is a necessary condition before the Placement Service can stabilize farm employment in any reasonable degree. This acceptance is growing as the acquiring of seasonal farm workers becomes increasingly a problem.

2. The Need for Regularizing Farm Labor Demand

The effort to improve the methods of job-finding and labor distribution is one approach to the problem of increasing the continuity of farm employment. The second logical line of attack is to try to regularize the demand for labor on the farm so as to flatten as far as possible the seasonal peaks in labor requirements. To this end proposals to modify farm practices and cropping systems have appeared from time to time during the last 30 years, only to be quite generally ignored. Despite notable examples of individual accomplishment, too little attention has been given this problem to make clear what can be done.

In the opinion of most farm management experts, the opportunities for absorbing more laborers through alterations in farming systems and changes in farm practices are so limited as to be negligible. By adding to their present undertakings others designed to utilize labor during slack seasons, farmers could stabilize employment. By eliminating the capital investment in labor-saving equipment and by performing on the farm processing that is now done elsewhere, farmers could employ a greater number of workers. Such developments would probably result in higher production costs and for this reason would not be generally adopted except at low wage rates for labor. Changes in types of farming such as those which follow the development of irrigation, the opening of range and forest land for crop production or the development of new labor consuming enterprises, as vegetable production, have only limited possibilities of increasing the use of laborers.

The trend, for economic reasons, has been in the direction of decreasing, rather than of increasing, the demand for farm labor. In most of the areas in which hand labor is employed on a large scale, the movement has been toward greater specialization in production, the growing of fewer kinds of products on farms, and the use of equipment which replaces labor. Improvements such as the tractor and tractor equipment, milking machines, and spraying equipment, have all tended to reduce the amount of regularly employed labor used in production. On the other hand, with the exceptions of the corn picker and the combine-harvester for small grain and seeds, few developments have reduced the need for harvest labor. The effect has been to increase the need for hired labor for short periods and to reduce the time during which such hired labor will be required.

The trend toward larger farms, accompanying improvement in equipment, has served to increase the size of the farm units and to accentuate further the need for seasonally hired labor. The larger farm calls for an investment in equipment which reduces rather than increases the amount of labor used. Much of the work on cotton is still done by hand labor but the time required has been reduced for all operations except picking. Tillage and harvesting machinery has reduced the total labor for small grains. The combine-harvester has nearly eliminated seasonal labor for harvesting and threshing of small grains. Corn machinery, particularly in the Corn Belt, has increased the acreage that could be handled by one man. For such crops as fruit and truck, the transformations brought about by large unit operation have undoubtedly increased the need for hired workers but have at the same time eliminated many small-scale producers. Although the increase in production of fruit and vegetables may have increased the amount of labor used in truck and fruit areas, the tendency to specialization by areas has been increasing the concentration of seasonal labor rather than providing permanent employment.

On family farms adjustments can be made and lines of production can be developed which will utilize more fully the available supply of labor. Such supplementary enterprises as dairying, poultry production, beef-cattle feeding, and to some extent the production of truck crops, can be developed to obtain a better utilization of family labor. Consequently, there may be some possibility in limited areas for developing enterprises to use year-round hired labor, but the returns from such enterprises are likely to be too low to justify them unless markets for these products are at the same time expanded. Diversification, carried to a commercial scale, offers limited possibilities for absorbing unemployed workers except at very low rates of pay.

A limited possibility for expansion may be found in those areas in which the farm enterprise is expanding. The development of fruit and truck production or other products requiring a great deal of hand labor may be feasible in some instances. An illustration of this is the recent development of such enterprises in the Pacific Northwest with the resulting demand for a greater number of workers. The substitution of crops for native grasses in some range areas has opened new fields for farm employment. The expansion of the dairy industry in general farming and in grain producing areas likewise has offered additional employment.

For those areas offering semi-permanent employment to workers, the development of part-time or subsistence farms may offer a desirable alternative to the present system of part-time employment of migrant labor. The practicability of part-time farming by farm laborers, however, depends upon their ability to secure employment on other farms or from sources outside agriculture for a great part of the year.

D. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

For the last hundred years, workers in countries of the western world have resorted to organization as a means of improving their working and living conditions. Most of these efforts, however, have been made by non-agricultural workers. In the United States, particularly, union organization has been confined in the past to workers in non-agricultural establishments. Indicative of a scarcity of farm labor unions in the United States is the observation made as recently as 1935 by a foreign observer and student of the subject: "There are no organizations of agricultural workers whatever in Canada or the United States of America," although she noted that beginnings were appearing. ^{136/} This observation is valuable not so much as a strictly accurate statement, but rather as a reflection of the difficulties involved in establishing permanent unions of farm wage workers. The obstacles confronting such an achievement have been formidable in the past and to a large extent remain so today. Nevertheless, at various times, organized industrial workers in this country have found it desirable and even necessary to support labor organization in the field of agriculture. The danger existed, it was believed, that rural workers who remained unorganized constituted a potential competitive supply of cheap labor that could undermine the labor standards industrial workers had achieved through union organization.

In some European countries the state itself has assisted in the organization of agricultural laborers as a means of furnishing a basis for a system of wage boards or for implementing other measures of social legislation. Thus, in contrast with the United States, where only a small fraction of the approximately four million farm wage workers and sharecroppers are organized, farm laborers in these European countries had been successful in establishing relatively permanent and influential unions as early as the 1880's, and by the 1920's these unions could claim memberships totalling about three million. ^{137/}

^{136/} Howard, Louise E, Labour in Agriculture, London, Oxford Press, 1935, p-183.

^{137/} Collective bargaining in agriculture developed steadily in some of the European countries after the first World war and by 1933, it has been estimated, covered about five million agricultural workers. One of the largest and most influential farm laborers' organizations today is the Scottish Farm Servant's Union founded in 1912.

The international movement among agricultural workers unions also followed the war. In 1920 two organizations were established: (a) The International Landworkers' Federation and (b) The International Federation of Christian Landworkers' Trade Unions. These two bodies claimed a combined membership of over three million farm workers in the 1920's. (Louise E. Howard, Labour in Agriculture London, Oxford Press, 1935, p-185.)

The purposes of union organization in agriculture, as in other industries, are of a varied character: economic, cooperative, educational, fraternal. On the economic side the purpose is two-fold. On the one hand, the aim is to establish a standard rate of wages; on the other, to define and standardize the amount and kind of work to be performed for the standard rate. In addition, however, there is hardly any method for improving the lot of laborers, which has not, at some time or other, served as an objective of trade union action. Regulation of working conditions has been made, so far as possible, a part of the collective agreements with the employer. But the provision of union benefits such as payments made in the event of unemployment, illness or death also has played an important part in improving worker welfare through union organization. In some countries, as with "approved societies" in England, unions and their cooperating associations have been used by the State as a mechanism for social insurance systems.

1. Factors Retarding Union Organization

A number of difficulties are usually pointed out to account for the slow growth of unionism in agriculture. Hired men on farms are widely scattered and lack the close and regular contacts with one another that encourage and effectuate organization. Where these farm workers have close personal ties with their employers or have good prospects of rising up the agricultural tenure ladder, they constitute poor "timber" for organizational efforts. Seasonal workers, particularly in areas of crop concentration, have close contacts with one another, but the irregular character of their work, especially if they are migrants, makes relationships so casual that lasting organizations are difficult to form. Moreover, the low wages and intermittent earnings of these workers do not permit them to pay dues regularly and in sufficient amount to sustain their union, extend its activities, and create a financial reserve out of which unemployment and other benefits may be paid. Where such organizational attempts have been supported financially by fellow unionists in other industries or by interested groups of urban persons, relatively stable union locals have been set up.

The strong resistance of large farm employers to union organization has also handicapped the development and stability of unions among the agricultural workers. The record of attempts to organize unions among farm workers has been marred by violence. Small farm operators also have opposed unions in agriculture. This opposition has rested on the fear that the union organization would put an end to the flexibility of wages, the one remaining flexible factor in their costs of production.

The fact that agricultural workers are not guaranteed the same rights as non-agricultural workers under the National Labor Relations Act has also been an obstacle to the development of unions among farm workers.

Because of these unfavorable circumstances organization of agricultural workers has not been the energetic concern of the labor movement in this country. Where such attempts were made, the organizational and structural methods customarily used among urban workers have proved inadequate for use among farm wage laborers. In spite of the foregoing very tangible and formidable obstacles, attempts at unionism in American agriculture have been made in the past, and in more recent years such efforts have made some headway.

2. Development of Farm Labor Unions

a. Prior to 1914

The history of trade unions among American workers outside of agricultural occupations extends back to early in the 19th century. Unions of farm workers, however, date only from the beginning of the present century, although protective and fraternal organizations among minority racial groups or unions organized on the basis of foreign national origin or language of their members were founded before 1900.

One of the first general unions for farm laborers was the Sheep Shearers' Union of North America, organized along craft lines in 1903, incorporated in Montana ten years later, affiliated as a federally chartered union with the A.F. of L. in 1932, and merged with the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butchers Workmen of North America (A.F. of L.) in 1940. Prospective members were required to be able to shear 100 head of sheep per day. In 1935, this union reported a membership of about 1500. It is, apparently, the oldest functioning agricultural union in the country today.

Little organizing was done among farm workers by the American Federation of Labor prior to the first World War. A few city central bodies and State Federations of Labor called for farm labor organization at a number of national conventions of the American Federation of Labor during the period 1909 to 1913. These bodies argued that seasonal farm hands competed for jobs with AFL organized craftsmen in small communities where skill and specialization was not, as yet, at a premium. Others supported such action on more humanitarian grounds, pointing to extremely poor conditions among the migratory harvest workers on the Pacific Coast.

Because the Federation was trying to create a rural market for its union-label goods by cooperating with agricultural groups, it was not disposed to begin in the rural areas an organizing campaign that would antagonize the farmers. The AFL Executive Council devised plans for union organization in agriculture, but no action was taken. ^{138/} Thus on the eve of the first World War the job of organizing labor in the field of agriculture was left to a younger organization which had entered the farm scene during the first decade of the present century, chiefly in the corn and wheat areas of the Middle West and in the fruit districts of the Pacific Coast:- the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.).

b. World War Period (1914-1918)

At that time, single or unattached seasonal harvest workers were numerically more important than they are today. It was natural, therefore, that the IWW should have concentrated its efforts on this type of farm laborer which, in the main, was migratory in character. The economic situation created by the first World War, moreover, favored a drive to better the conditions of these workers. Farm-commodity prices had risen, the corresponding movement of farm wages lagged and the increased demand for farm products strengthened the bargaining power of farm labor.

Farm labor activities of the IWW were restricted almost exclusively to the Far and Middle West and it was in these areas that it achieved its greatest success between 1915 and 1917. Although the social philosophy of the IWW touched the roots of our economic system, propounding, among other things, the abolition of the wage system, its immediate program of action lay within the framework of the prevailing economy. It sought to abolish illegal restraint of all kinds, demanded for workers proper board and lodging, a ten-hour work day, a standard wage of \$4.00 a day during the harvest season, and free transportation where the latter proved necessary. ^{139/}

^{138/} Lorwin, L.L., The American Federation of Labor, 1933, pages 110-111.

^{139/} Veblen, Thorstein, Essays in Our Changing Order, p. 32

The organizational structure of the IWW included a "department of agriculture, land, fisheries, and water products," and an Industrial Union for Agricultural Workers. 140/ It has been estimated that in California in 1914 the IWW had a number of paid and unpaid organizers, 5,000 dues-paying members in 40 branches, and a large following among thousands of other unskilled and migratory agricultural workers. 141/ In 1916 the IWW claimed some 18,000 workers in its Agricultural Workers' Organization. 142/

The IWW did not lay any basis for a permanent system of collective bargaining in farm and rural areas, but its activities resulted in obtaining higher wages in a considerable number of cases and led to general improvement in the working and living conditions of migratory agricultural workers. A number of reasons are generally offered to explain the decline of this body. The principal ones are: (a) the agricultural depression of the post-war years; (b) the loose structural form of its organization; (c) the failure to consolidate its gains; (d) the concerted and violent opposition of farmers against some of its syndicalistic tactics; and, (e) its suppression by the public authorities. The IWW gradually disappeared, and after the war few remnants of organized existence remained. 143/

c. The 1920's

Farm labor organizational activities in the 1920's were feeble and desultory. Interest of the AFL in this field after the war was limited to the action which it took in 1922 in chartering a National Agricultural Workers' Union. No actual organizational work seems to have taken place and the charter was withdrawn the next year. 144/ An attempt was made also to establish a closer relationship between the AFL and the Fruit and Vegetables Workers' Union of North America, an independent union organized in 1922. This union claimed about 1,900 members when it affiliated with the AFL the same year it was organized.

- 140/ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Handbook of American Trade Unions. (1929 edition), Bulletin 506.
141/ State Relief Administration of California, Migratory Labor in California, 1936, pp. 56-57.
142/ Brissenden, P. F., The IWW, A Study of American Syndicalism, (Columbia University Studies), p. 338.
143/ See 1929 Handbook of Labor Statistics and S. S. Gamb's The Decline of the IWW, 1932.
144/ Sufrin, S. C., "Labor Organization in Agricultural America". American Journal of Sociology, 43:544-59 (1938)

The next year, however, it was disbanded. ^{145/} No agricultural unions seem to have been affiliated with the AFL during this period until 1932 when the Sheep Shearers' Union of North America joined the Federation.

In 1928 two independent unions of Mexican workers were organized, one with a membership of 1,200 among the fruit and vegetable workers in the Imperial Valley of California, the other with a membership of 2,000 in the sugar beet areas of Colorado and neighboring States. ^{146/} These were practically the only organizations of agricultural workers of any importance formed during the decade 1920-30. Neither union survived.

d. Since 1930:

(1) The Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union of the Trade Union Unity League

The economic depression which began in the fall of 1929 brought a new period of organizational activity among agricultural workers. Between 1929 and 1933 wage rates paid to hired farm labor dropped by more than half, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics index declining from 180 in 1929 (1910-14 = 100) to 85 in 1933. ^{147/} Earnings were cut still further as the farm labor market became glutted with former farm workers returning from the economically depressed urban centers.

At this juncture, in California's chief crop-growing regions, leadership in organizational work was taken by the Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union (CAWIU) during the period 1931-33. In 1933 alone, according to the union, its representatives led more than 40,000 workers in 22 strikes throughout the agricultural valleys of California. The CAWIU was affiliated with the Trade Union Unity League (TUUL). Like the older IWW, the TUUL and its affiliated union organizations sought elimination of an economy based on private profit and ownership of the means of production. Unlike the syndicalist philosophy of the IWW, however, the principles of the TUUL called for greater attention to bread-and-butter problems of trade unionism and to political action as an adjunct to industrial organization.

^{145/} Lorwin, L. L., op. cit., pp. 494, 476, and 482.

^{146/} Report of Governor C. C. Young's Mexican Fact-Finding Committee, Mexicans in California, 1930.

^{147/} U. S. Department of Agriculture, The Agricultural Situation, January 1942, p. 24.

The brief life of the CAWIU was marked with a succession of strikes, on a scale larger than any previously seen on the farms of the Pacific Coast. However, it was unable to maintain and stabilize its membership after strikes were ended. When a number of the CAWIU leaders were arrested, tried, and convicted on charges of violating the California criminal syndicalism law, the union was dealt a severe blow from which it failed to recover. In 1935 it was dissolved when its parent organization, the TUUL, recommended that its members join the American Federation of Labor.

(2) Federal Locals of the AFL and Independent Unions

The NRA campaign of 1933 gave new strength to efforts to establish unionism among agricultural workers. Farm workers in many parts of the country applied for charters as federal locals, that is, as locals to be affiliated directly with the national AFL organization. Independent agricultural laborers' unions also sprang up. They were established among onion pickers in Ohio, cranberry pickers in Massachusetts, and sugar beet workers in Michigan, Ohio, and the Rocky Mountain area. California saw the growth of many new AFL locals as well as the rebirth of many old independent unions. Arizona and Washington were also affected. Cotton workers' unions evolved in Alabama, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. 148/ In 1935 it was estimated that there were 98 agricultural labor unions of which 54 were affiliated with the AFL as federal locals. 149/

Although neither the NRA nor the AAA assumed responsibility over the working conditions of farm labor, the workers themselves thought they were included under the Acts, and many of the newly organized groups appealed to the NRA Labor Advisory Board to establish labor standards. Others sent in proposed labor codes of fair competition to the NRA. In 1933, for example, some 35,000 negro and white citrus workers in Florida joined an independent union which appealed to the Labor Advisory Board for protection under the codes. 150/

148/ Unions mentioned in different issues of the Rural Worker, August-December 1935.

149/ Sufrin, S. C., Labor Organization in Agricultural America, The American Journal of Sociology, January 1938, page 548.

150/ Labor Fact Book, II, Labor Research Association, (International Publishers) p. 163.

By 1936, it was reported, the AFL had given federal charters to 62 locals of which 40 were field workers and 22 were cannery and packinghouse unions paying per capita taxes on 7,600 members. ^{151/} The chief request of the 13 delegates representing farm workers at the 1936 AFL convention was for an international charter so that agricultural workers could set up their own staff with their own funds and thus render better service to the local unions. This request had the support of several State Federations of Labor. The matter was referred to the Executive Council which in 1937 turned down the request for an international charter but agreed to set up a national agricultural workers' council, presumably a preliminary step before deciding whether to issue such a charter. Dissatisfied with this decision, most of these locals met at Denver, Colo., in July and formed a national organization of farm and food processing workers; this body assumed the name of the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America, which voted to affiliate with the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

At the annual convention of the AFL held in October 1937, after many of its former federal farm laborer locals had joined the CIO, the Executive Board was instructed to call a conference of all its remaining federal locals of agricultural, packing, and cannery workers. There is, however, no record of such a conference having been called and in 1938 the question of organizing agricultural workers was not discussed at the convention. The president of the AFL reported at the time that there were 64 local unions of agricultural, cannery and citrus workers with a total membership of about 22,000. ^{152/} Most of these locals were in canneries in California and Washington, a few were located in Florida. Not many of these were locals of field workers.

In 1939 the Executive Council reported that the AFL had chartered 13 new locals of agricultural, canning and citrus workers since July 5, 1938. The proceedings of the 1939 annual convention of the Federation that year listed the following unions in this field: Fruit and Cannery Workers' union, Olympia, Washington; Fish Cannery Workers, Pittsburgh, California; Agricultural Laborers, Orange County, California; Cannery Workers' Union, San Pedro, California; Beet Sugar Workers' Union, Santa Ana, California; Cereal Workers's and

^{151/} Proceedings of the 1936 Convention of the American Federation of Labor. One delegate at this convention stated that the high per capita tax led these locals to pay for only one-tenth of their actual membership.

^{152/} Proceedings of the 1938 AFL Convention, p. 84.

Allied Industries, Battle Creek, Michigan; Cotton Workers' Union, Chattanooga, Tennessee; Fruit and Vegetable Workers' Union, Salinas, California.

Others listed in the 1940 Convention proceedings were: Cannery Workers' Union, Hayward, California; Packers and Preserve Workers' Union, San Francisco, California; and Vegetable Packing House Employees' Union, Princeton, Florida.

At the 1940 convention of the Federation, the delegates from the California State Federation of Labor introduced a resolution that the AFL approve the establishment of an autonomous National Council of Fruit and Vegetable Cannery Workers, Preserve Workers, and Dried Fruit and Nut Workers. It was claimed that locals of these workers had a combined membership of 60,000 which over a period of three years had paid in a total of about \$225,000 in per capita taxes to the American Federation of Labor. The resolution also provided that all federal chartered locals in this field be requested to become part of such a council and that a definite proportion of the per capita tax paid by them be allocated back to the National Council for organizational work. This resolution was referred to the Executive Council of the AFL.

In the spring of 1941, the AFL assisted the striking lemon pickers in Ventura County, California, in forming a local and then chartering it under the name of the Agricultural and Citrus Workers Union. ^{153/} In the spring of the same year, the AFL seems to have secured a foothold in the agricultural and food processing field in Southern New Jersey. The Seabrook Farms signed a written agreement with the Amalgamated Meat Cutters' and Butchers' Workmen of North America, an affiliate of the AFL. The agreement established practically a closed shop since all the field and shed workers employed by the company were to become members

^{153/} George Meany, Peonage in California, American Federationist, May 1941, page 5.

of the union. The lowest pay under the contract was to be 35 cents an hour for unskilled farm labor. Wage increases, among other benefits, were provided in the agreement. 154/

(3) Sharecroppers' and Tenants' Unions

Organization of sharecroppers in the South began in Tallapoosa and Lee Counties, Ala., in 1931. In the spring of that year a union of sharecroppers and day laborers, mostly Negroes, was formed under the name of the Sharecroppers' Union of Alabama. Branches were later set up in Florida, Georgia, and in the Carolinas. Its activities on behalf of sharecroppers and other disadvantaged tenants and farm workers were forcibly resisted by planters and much violence resulted.

In the spring of 1935, the union led a strike of a few hundred cotton choppers in Alabama and claimed success in boosting wages on a number of plantations up to 75 cents and \$1 a day. In the summer of the same year, it conducted a strike of a few thousand cotton pickers in central Alabama where harvesting wages were reported as low as 35 cents a day. In more recent years, the union has attempted to eliminate abuses under the AAA crop control program.

In 1936, this union claimed a membership of about 12,000 in Alabama, Louisiana, and North Carolina. 155/ Most of it, however, was in Alabama where the organization originated. In that year it merged with the Alabama Farmers' Union which is affiliated with the Farmers' Educational and Cooperative Union of America, more commonly known as the National Farmers' Union.

154/ New York Herald Tribune, March 16, 1941; Southern New Jersey is the area in which the Agricultural Workers' Union, an AFL federal chartered union, seems to have had jurisdiction since the early 1930's. This union, under the name of the Agricultural and Cannery Workers' Union of Southern New Jersey, was originally one of the TUUL affiliates before it was chartered by the AFL in 1935. With the formation of the UCAPAWA in 1937, it was one of the AFL federal chartered unions which transferred its affiliation to the CIO. In 1934, this union claimed membership of about 1,000 seasonal truck farm workers in eight locals. A strike, which the union conducted against the Seabrook Farms in April 1934, increased hourly wage rates from 12 and 15 cents to 25 and 30 cents, thus strengthening the organization. A subsequent strike in June of the same year against the Company seems to have prevented wage cuts but the union apparently suffered organizationally. Its present strength is not known.

155/ Labor Research Association, Labor Fact Book, III, (International Publishers), p. 145.

A group similar to the Alabama Farmers' Union and affiliated to the National Farmers' Union, is the Louisiana Farmers' Union. The latter has local organizations which include sharecroppers and small tenant farmers who work in the cane fields during the harvest period. This union has been active in filing wage claims for its members under the provisions of the Sugar Act of 1937.

Another sharecroppers' and tenant farmers' union, organized in the South in the early 1930's, was the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union. It originated in eastern Arkansas in the summer of 1934 chiefly as a group opposing reported abuses under the AAA crop control program in the South, adversely affecting sharecroppers and small tenants. In 1935, it conducted a cotton pickers strike in Arkansas and Texas which resulted, it was claimed, in raising wages on a number of plantations to 75 cents and \$1.00 per hundred pounds of cotton picked. By 1937, this union claimed an enrolled membership of about 30,000 in more than 300 locals located in seven Southern and Southwestern States. About 90 percent of its locals and membership were in Arkansas and Oklahoma, 60 percent of them being in Arkansas. ^{156/} Locals were also established in Texas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Missouri, and North Carolina. This was the year the STFU reached its organizational peak, being recognized then as the largest union of agricultural workers in the South.

In the same year (1937), the union abandoned its independent status by affiliating with the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America, but this affiliation lasted less than two years, the withdrawal being made in March 1939. It lost an appreciable number of its locals and members to the UCAW at the time of and since the split. The union claimed 40,000 members in over 100 locals in the summer of 1940. ^{157/} Since 1934, the composition of the membership of the STFU has undergone a material change. In the early years, some 90 percent of its

^{156/} Proceedings of the 1937 Convention of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union.

^{157/} House Committee Investigating the Interstate Migration of Destitute Citizens. Montgomery Hearings, August 14-16, 1940, part 2, page 826; also Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, Report of the Secretary, January 1940.

members were sharecroppers or tenant farmers; today over 75 percent are day laborers.

(4) United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America, C. I. O.

In January 1935, a number of AFL federal locals, impatient with the progress being made towards obtaining a national charter, established a National Committee of Agricultural and Rural Workers to coordinate their efforts and to work toward the establishment of one nation-wide union of all agricultural and rural workers. Their ultimate objective was to obtain a national charter from the Federation. This Committee sent out organizers, helped develop unions in a number of areas through the country, published a union organ (the "Rural Worker"), and agitated for lowering the per capita tax levied on farm worker locals by the AFL.

By 1937 this Committee succeeded in setting up or in helping to bring together joint organizations of agricultural workers' unions and cannery and packing shed locals in various parts of the country. Such organizations were the California Federation of Cannery and Agricultural Workers' Union, the Northwest Council of Cannery, Packing House and Agricultural Workers, New Jersey State Committee of Agricultural and Cannery Unions and the Colorado Conference of Beet Field and Agricultural Unions. ^{158/} In California, the Federation of Cannery and Agricultural Workers took a stand for CIO affiliation, after the State Federation of Labor, (which desired the organizational separation of field workers from cannery workers) ^{159/} turned down a request for a State-wide union including both types of labor.

In June 1937, 44 AFL federal local unions and eight independent unions issued a call to all agricultural, cannery, and packing shed unions to attend a national convention in Denver to form an international union and to decide whether affiliation should be with the AFL or the CIO. The call to the meeting stated:

"The policy of the CIO in successfully organizing in industry-wide unions and their policy of aggressively assisting the organization of the unorganized with advice, funds, and organizers make it necessary for us to seriously consider affiliation to the CIO." ^{160/}

^{158/} Rural Worker, July 1937.

^{159/} Ibid.

^{160/} Ibid.

It appeared at the start, therefore, that the CIO, with its emphasis upon industry-wide organization, rather than the AFL, with its policy of preserving craft union interests, would be the choice for affiliation.

In July 1937, 97 delegates representing, it was claimed, about 100,000 workers from 78 different locals (50 of which were stated to be agricultural field workers' locals) from 21 States met in Denver, Colorado and organized an international--The United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America (UCAPAWA). Of the 78 locals represented, 45 were chartered AFL locals, a few were CIO industrial locals, and the rest independent unions, the latter including the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union and racial unions of Filipinos, Mexicans, and Japanese on the Pacific Coast. The vote to join the CIO was practically unanimous. The chief strength of the new union was in California, Washington, Colorado, New Jersey, eastern Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Missouri. The delegates voted to admit "all types of agricultural workers, all fruit, fish, and vegetable canning and packing workers in allied fields." They further set forth as a basic aim "to work concertedly with the general labor movement to bring about a higher standard of living to all workers and small oppressed families." 161/

The President of the UCAPAWA, in making his report to the second national convention, listed as the major accomplishment of the organization since its founding "the establishment on a stable trade union basis of a nation-wide organization." 162/ This stable basis, it was observed, did not rest on the agricultural field workers' locals, but rather on the organized food and fish processing workers. The experience of their union and of other agricultural unions had already demonstrated that although field workers might join farm labor unions in considerable numbers, their adherence was often unstable and their dues payments irregular; in short, they formed a very poor basis for a strong labor organization. Consequently, the union adopted the strategy of expanding its major efforts in organizing workers in semi-industrial food establishments such as packing sheds and canneries. Because of their more certain job tenure, higher earnings, and greater stability of location, workers in these plants, it was argued, could form more closely knit organizations, could successfully

161/ Proceedings of the First National Convention of the UCAPAWA, 1937.
162/ Report of the General President, Second Annual Convention, UCAPAWA
December, 1938.

bargain collectively with their employers, and could serve to launch effective organizational work among farm field laborers. Once the industries on the border line between farming and non-agricultural enterprise were strongly organized, the union maintained the way would open to the successful organization of the field workers. According to this plan of organization, large locals of canning and processing workers, with steady dues-paying memberships, would enable the union to continue the organization of farm laborers who could not be expected to be self-supporting in the early stages of union organization.

It was held also that cannery and packing shed workers, if organized, would refuse to cross the picket lines of field workers or to work on non-union agricultural produce, and thus would increase the bargaining power of the field workers. A number of incidents in California illustrate this strategy. Mexican lemon pickers in San Fernando, it was alleged, were helped in a strike situation resulting in a wage increase, when girl shed workers refused to cross picket lines. 163/ At Bryte, pear pickers, it was held, won a wage increase after a short strike in which they participated with the packers and truck drivers in the orchard. 164/

In spite of the fact that the claimed 38,300 processing workers in 1938 made up the main financial and organizational strength of the UCAPAWA, they were that year outnumbered by the agricultural field worker members who, according to the union, totaled about 86,000. 165/ Of the field worker membership, about 15,000 were said to be located in the Colorado, Wyoming, Nebraska, and Montana sugar beet areas; 38,000 were classified as cotton field workers in Arkansas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Alabama, and Texas; the rest were distributed among fruit and vegetable field locals in California, Washington, and New Jersey, among a small number of citrus workers locals in Florida, and among a few locals of sugar beet workers in the Michigan-Ohio area.

163/ CIO News, UCAPAWA edition, October 17, 1938.

164/ Ibid., August 20, 1938.

165/ Report of the General President, Second Annual Convention, UCAPAWA, December 1938.

At the national convention of this union held in December 1940, a total membership of over 100,000 was reported for the United States, Canada, Hawaii, and Alaska. Of this total, about 26,400 represented the industrial membership in 86 locals and about 75,000 were agricultural field workers organized in 159 locals. 166/ The agricultural workers' locals comprised, for the most part, sharecroppers, fruit and vegetable workers and sugar beet workers. It was stated that the industrial membership figures were "conservative and reliable" while those of agricultural field workers were rough estimates largely because it was difficult to ascertain precisely the number of these workers who, in large part, were seasonal and migratory.

The union's major gains in 1939 and 1940 were made in the industrial section. The largest percentage increases in membership were recorded by locals in the semi-industrial establishments which processed food, dried fruit and nuts, tobacco, and grains. For the first time, a Tobacco Division was established within the framework of the union. This move was an outgrowth of the jurisdiction over the tobacco industry granted the union by the CIO in January 1941. Gains were reported also in cotton processing, compressing, and ginning. These gains were important to the union since as recently as 1938 the industrial membership was almost exclusively in fish-canning and seafood establishments. The activities of the union in 1939 and 1940 also resulted in expanding its operations outside of the West Coast Districts, where formerly the major efforts of the union were concentrated. The total rise in the industrial membership in December 1940 over December 1938 was claimed to be slightly over 80 percent. 167/

166/ Proceedings of the Third National Convention of UCAPAWA, December 1940. Since the third convention, 17 new locals were reported to have been chartered. (UCAPAWA News, August 8, 1941.)

167/ This percentage increase does not correspond to the membership figures reported for 1938. It is assumed that a different 1938 base was used in this computation.

For 1939, 1940, and the first half of 1941, the union reported a total of more than \$1,500,000 in wage increases achieved through the International's contractual agreements with employers. It will be noted that the average number of workers per contract and per company covered is very small. "This means," the officers of the union pointed out, "that a very large number of companies have been organized and contracts signed, but that the great majority of these have been very small companies." Below, is a tabular presentation of the number of contracts and the number of companies, plants and workers covered under them. 168/

	: 1937	: 1938	: 1940	: June 30, 1941
Number of contracts	: 30	: 65	: 158	: 189
Number of workers under contract	: :	: :	: :	: :
normal	: 7035	: 9003	: 13,169	: 20,269
seasonal peak	: 8625	: 11,909	: 19,670	: 31,670
Number of companies covered	: 88	: 125	: 223	: 253
Number of plants covered	: 153	: 181	: 276	: 307
	: :	: :	: :	: :

Source: Proceedings of the Third National Convention of UCAPAWA, December, 1940

168/ As of August 1941, negotiations were in progress in 14 other plants where NLRB elections had been won or organizational work completed.

As of December 1940, 153 union contracts covering about 18,000 semi-industrial workers were distributed as follows: 169/

Industry	: Number of : Contracts	: Workers : Covered
Fruit and vegetable canning, processing and packing	: 36	: 2416
Fish canning and processing	: 10	: 5480
Cotton and cotton seed processing, compressing and ginning	: 5	: 500
Dried Fruit and nut processing	: 11	: 5785
Grain processing and milling	: 13	: 475
Horticulture (greenhouse, nursery, cemetery, etc.)	: 17	: 443
Tobacco	: 50	: 990
Others	: 11	: 1365
Total	: 153	: 18,054

Between November 1939 and December 1940, UCAPAWA had been a party in 48 NLRB elections, in 42 of which it polled a majority of the vote and was designated as the collective bargaining agent of almost 9,000 workers. 170/ Since the third convention in December 1940, it has won 14 out of 17 such elections. Between November 1939 and October 1940 the union engaged in 42 strikes involving about 24,000 workers.

169/ UCAPAWA Third Convention, Proceedings, op cit

170/ It lost 5 elections and tied in the other; slightly over 10,000 workers were involved in the 48 elections.

The union reportedly won 26 of these strikes, affecting about 22,000 workers. 171/ Most of the strikes were called by industrial locals 172/ as a result of refusal by employers to renegotiate new contracts calling for improved conditions. 173/

3. Strikes and Employer-Union Relationships

a. Strikes

Strikes in agriculture have attained numerical importance only since 1933. That low wages, long hours, and other grievances did not result in a greater number of strikes before is partly explained by the observation that "discontent may be greatest precisely when and because workers exist so precariously that they have no hope of bettering their immediate position through the use of economic weapons." 174/

During the period 1927-1939, 42 strikes involving more than 1,000 workers each occurred, and 7 which involved more than 5,000 workers each. Two strikes of cotton workers in California affected approximately 10,000 workers each. Agricultural strikes during this 13-year period included, on the average, 775 workers each. More than one-half of these strikes occurred in fruit and vegetable areas where large groups of field workers are employed. Although by far the largest number of such strikes occurred in California, their widespread incidence is indicated by the fact that 30 States and the District of Columbia were affected by one or more strikes during the 6-year period 1933-1938. 175/

Data on the outcome of 197 strikes reported for the 12 years (1927-1938) indicate that clear-cut gains were won by workers in 47 cases and partial success in 75. Thus, total or partial objectives were achieved in 62 percent of the strikes in which the outcome was known. The record of strikes in agriculture between 1927 and 1941 is shown in the following table:

171/ The union lost 3 strikes and the rest were indecisive.

172/ Five agricultural workers' locals and 37 industrial locals participated in these strikes.

173/ UCAPAWA, Third Convention, Proceedings, on cit.

174/ U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Strikes in the United States, 1880-1936, Bulletin 651, p. v.

175/ Data compiled by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Department of Agriculture, from all available sources. The data may include some small strikes not recorded by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and sometimes other than field workers.

Strikes in Agriculture, 1927-1941
(Covers field workers only; packing-shed and cannery workers are excluded)

Year	Number of Strikes	Number of Workers Involved	Number of Man-days Idle During Year
1927	2	322	694
1928	4	410	2,770
1929	-	-	-
1930	5	2,905	26,080
1931	5	2,020	15,225
1932	10	1,762	28,687
1933	35	34,012	516,900
1934	27	25,943	244,753
1935	19	14,888	139,494
1936	28	15,369	259,120
1937	28	5,080	32,842
1938	34	11,023	94,040
1939	25	26,207	194,880
1940	14	2,130	37,359
1941 (11 mos.)	22	10,070	388,747

Sources:

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor, Strikes in the United States 1880-1936, Bulletin #651, p. 159, also, Monthly issues of Monthly Labor Review, 1938-1941.

About 85 percent of the strikes which occurred before 1940 were concerned primarily with demands for higher wages or opposition to wage cuts. It can be assumed that those in 1940 and in the first half of 1941, were, for the most part for higher wages as farm commodity prices and cost of living rose. The fact that union recognition was the major issue in but few cases indicates that organized collective bargaining on a long-run basis was not clearly envisaged by either the farm operators or the workers.

Strikes in agriculture are costly to all concerned: farm operators stand to lose their perishable crops; ^{176/} striking workers are likely to lose much of their wages, as other laborers are taken on to complete the harvest; the community stands to lose because of reduction

^{176/} The gravity of the strike problem is indicated by the estimate that approximately 65 percent, of California's entire crop value was involved in the 1933 strikes. House of Representatives Committee on Labor, Hearings on the Labor Disputes Act, 1935, H. R. 6288, p. 342

in business and labor, of lowered tax revenues, of increased relief burdens, and of lowered political morality which accompanies strikes and often results in violation of civil liberties. Unions and farm employers have become keenly aware of these difficulties and more and more have had recourse to the United States Conciliation Service, to mediate their disputes. Between 1933 and 1938, the Conciliation Service was called upon 51 times to aid in the settlement of agricultural labor controversies.

b. Employer-Union Relationships

While written union agreements between agricultural field workers and growers are rare, they are not totally unknown. However, agreements that have been reached usually lasted only during a specific job and provided no basis for peaceful and orderly negotiation to meet future problems. Perhaps the most important field agreement concluded in recent years was the Blissfield, Mich., closed field contract of 1935. In June of that year the Blissfield Beet Growers' Association of Michigan, representing about 1400 growers, signed a closed field agreement with the Agricultural Workers' Union, an AFL federal chartered local. About the same time, another AFL local at Findlay, Ohio, signed an agreement with the Findlay sugar beet growers. This agreement, however, was not a closed field contract. The Blissfield agreement, which was in force until January 1, 1936, was described by the union as a model contract.

A number of agreements were signed by organized poultry and dairy workers and employers in California in 1937. One of these agreements was signed by the largest poultry farm in the United States, the Taylor Runnymede Farms of Reseda, Calif., with the Valley Poultry Workers Union, affiliated with the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America. The contract was in force from October 1937 to October 1938 and was renewed for another year at the expiration date. In 1939 and 1940 these farms were struck because of failure to renew the contract on conditions favorable to both parties. In 1937 and 1938 at least 10 written agreements were in force between the Dairy Workers' Union in Los Angeles, affiliated with the UCAPAWA, and farm and dairy companies located in a number of California cities.

Two written agreements were on record in 1938 and 1939 between pea and bean field workers represented by UCAPAWA in Seattle, Wash., and the Japanese Association of Bainbridge Island, Wash. Another, affecting pea pickers, was negotiated in Colorado in 1938. On November 4, 1939, a written agreement was signed by a UCAPAWA local representing cotton pickers and the Mineral King Cooperative Farms Association of Visalia, Calif. Also, following a strike for a 5 cents an hour wage increase by some 2700 celery cutters and shed workers near Stockton, Calif., in 1939, employers signed an agreement with the Filipino Agricultural Laborers' Association (an independent union). Two other written union agreements covering cotton pickers were in force in Kern County Calif., in 1937-1938.

4. Other Union Activities

For the most part, agricultural unions have used methods other than economic weapons to gain their objectives.

In nearly all of the hearings held under the Sugar Act of 1937 on the determination of wage rates for workers in sugar cane and sugar beets, existing agricultural unions have appeared on behalf of the workers. In line with their legislative programs, the AFL, the CIO, and the STFU are on record in favor of extension of certain Federal and State labor and Social Security laws to agricultural labor. In the case of Federal legislation, these organizations favor such extensions of the Social Security Act, the National Labor Relations Act, and the Wages and Hours Act. Agricultural workers' unions have also urged amendments or clarification of the provisions in the Agricultural Adjustment Act and the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Acts which would eliminate administrative discriminations against sharecroppers and share tenants. They also favor the establishment of farm labor standards as a condition for growers receiving benefit payments similar to those which now obtain under the Sugar Act. About 325,000 agricultural workers in the sugar growing industry, about 160,000 of them being in the continental U. S., are covered by this Act which provides for "fair and reasonable" restrictions on the employment of child labor.

Agricultural labor unions have also attempted to secure work relief for members during periods of unemployment and to prevent their removal from relief rolls unless they are paid wages equal to those paid to unskilled workers on relief projects in the locality. These unions also favor a Federal uniform election law which would enfranchise many farm and rural workers now deprived of their votes by some State laws.

Some unions in agriculture have made studies on the working and living conditions of farm wage workers and have engaged in general educational activities in the interest of their members and for the enlightenment of public officials. During the present war emergency, agricultural unions have volunteered their services in meeting farm labor supply problems.

II. LEGISLATIVE PROTECTION

It is now generally agreed that even if a worker receives fair wages and works under satisfactory conditions, there are certain chances of life against which it is difficult for him to make adequate provision. On the job, an accident may occur involving inability to earn for a period, unforeseen expenses, and possibly permanent disablement. Even if the worker has contributed by his own carelessness to this event, and might therefore, as some think, be left to suffer the consequences, there remains his family to support and educate. In a similar manner, sickness may descend upon the wage earner or his dependents, creating problems with which he is unable to cope. The danger of unemployment lurks always in the background, with malnutrition, crowded housing, ill health, and family disorganization as its consequences. Finally, of course, there is the looming shadow of old age, the fear of insecurity and dependency at a time when failing powers render self-help difficult.

Among the measures which have been developed to assist in meeting these hazards of working-class life, there are a number which involve in greater or lesser degree the principle of insurance. This principle is simply that of distributing among many the losses sustained by a few. By the common method of fire insurance each individual in an organized group is assured that in case of the destruction of his property he will be reimbursed from a fund gathered little by little from the whole group by the insuring agency. Similarly people in many lands have cooperated for the purpose of building up funds out of which sickness, accident, unemployment, or death benefits are to be paid in case of need.

A. WAGE REGULATION

Efforts to increase income for farm workers--as well as income for other workers--commonly are aimed at raising wage rates. This offers a convenient point of attack.

The object of wage rate regulation is to bring about an increase in total earnings by means of an increase in wage rates; to standardize such rates over a given area so as to avoid underbidding among workers seeking employment; or to standardize them over a period of time so as to avoid the wide fluctuations which occur, especially in seasonal work.

In the United States, governmental action for the standardization of wage rates may be Federal--as in the case of the determination of wages of sugar beet and sugarcane workers under the Sugar Act of 1937; or the action may be in the nature of State minimum wage legislation.

Non-governmental regulation usually takes the form of agreements between voluntary associations of producers and laborers or between a single producer (individual or corporate) and such an association of the laborers employed by that producer.

1. Government Regulation in Other English-speaking Nations

In Australia and New Zealand

"Minimum wages" in the modern sense appeared first in the Antipodes as part of a campaign to relieve conditions in "sweated" trades. In 1894 New Zealand gave its district conciliation boards power to set minimum wage rates for underpaid workers. The first real minimum wage law was passed in 1896 by the State of Victoria; it established boards in six notoriously underpaid trades, including furniture making, baking, and boot-making. The purpose was to raise to a minimum level of subsistence certain depressed classes so situated that they were incapable of bargaining for themselves--rather than to establish higher standard wage rates for all workers.

Later, in 1900, the Victoria Act was expanded to cover other occupations in which there was no evidence of "sweating"; it thus became the regular method for fixing the standard wage rates.

In the other Australian states the development was similar. In those States minimum wage awards were closely connected with the system for arbitrating disputes between employees and employers.

In Australia there is separate and independent arbitration legislation for the whole Commonwealth and for each of the six States constituting the Commonwealth. The original Commonwealth Act of 1904 excluded agriculture but later any association of 100 or more workers in any industry was permitted to register and to apply for wages awards. Among agricultural workers only the pastoral and fruit workers have done so, the former for the first time in 1907, the latter in 1912. At first the Commonwealth pastoral award applied only to sheep shearers and other such skilled workers, but in 1917 the relatively unskilled shed hands were included. Awards in the separate States may supplement the Commonwealth awards, as by the grant of higher wages or by bringing in other groups of workers. In some States agriculture is expressly excluded from the operation of the Acts; in others, although not formally excluded, farm workers have seldom asked for awards. 177/

Although the original Conciliation and Arbitration Act of New Zealand formally included agriculture, the Court made no award applicable to ordinary farm workers during 40 years experience; however, it did include the pastoral industry and such industrialized agricultural occupations as the frozen meat trade. In 1936 the labor government of New Zealand undertook to combine the enactment of a statutory minimum wage for agricultural workers with the provision of administrative machinery for

raising this minimum, and, subsequently, also for reducing it, if necessary, but not below the minimum fixed by the statute. 178/ The Agricultural Workers Act sets out a schedule for workers on dairy farms: Section 20 of the Act sets forth that its provisions may be applied by Order of Council, with the necessary modifications, to any specified class of agricultural workers in addition to those on dairy farms. Under this section, an Order in Council was issued in February 1937, extending the provisions to workers employed in orchards, and in April 1937 to agricultural and pastoral workers employed on farms engaged in the commercial production of wool, meat and/ or grain. Subsequently, the question of including workers on tobacco farms was under consideration.

The Agricultural Workers Act links the wages of agricultural workers--at present only those of dairy farm workers--with the price of agricultural produce, as fixed by the Primary Products Marketing Act. The latter established a fixed price for butter and cheese and lays down the principle that prices may also be fixed for any other agricultural produce. 179/

Great Britain

In England, where the Victoria system was adopted in 1909, the development was similar. The English law applied first to four "sweated" occupations; then to others with "exceptionally" or "unduly" low wages; and in 1912 the regulation of coal miners' wages was undertaken for the purpose of promoting industrial peace rather than for the purpose of protecting a "sweated" group. During the war, extension to additional trades was rapid, agriculture being included from 1917 to 1921. In 1924 a new Agricultural Wages Act was passed which, with modifications, is still in force. In 1937 it was extended to Scotland.

The proportion of agricultural wage workers in relation to farmers is larger in Great Britain than in the United States. In 1937 about 740,000 British workers, of whom 110,000 were Scottish, fell within the scope of the Agricultural Wages Acts. Of the 644,000 male workers employed in agriculture, about 75,000 were casual workers and nearly 125,000 were under 21 years of age. 180/

According to the Agricultural Wages Acts the primary duty of the 58 local agricultural wages committees was, under the general guidance of a central board, to determine minimum time-

178/ Primary Products Marketing Act, May 1936; Agricultural Workers Act, September 1936.

179/ International Labour Office, Social Problems in Agriculture, Studies and Reports, Series K (Agriculture) No. 14, Geneva, 1938, pp. 81, 82.

180/ Sells, Dorothy, British Wage Boards, Brookings Institution, Washington, D. C., 1939, p. 145.

rates of wages for all agricultural workers in each county. In addition to this duty, which is mandatory, the committees have power to fix minimum piece-rates as well as to order payment of arrears. The committees are required to set forth what items in kind (such as board and lodging, fuel, potatoes, milk, etc.) may be reckoned as part payment of wages in place of cash, and they are required to evaluate such items when supplied. In connection with the determination of the wage rates, the committees deal with hours, with holidays, with perquisites, and with permits of exception.

The success of the Agricultural Wages Acts from an administrative standpoint is attested by the fact that in 1937, after a trial of 13 years in England and Wales, the provisions were extended to Scotland. This success is all the more noteworthy in view of the difficult circumstances in British agriculture during the period. Although British farmers have complained of the rates of wages fixed under the statutes as exceeding their ability to pay, their dissatisfaction in years preceding the present war was in part allayed by the increase in agricultural prices due to the preferential treatment accorded to agriculture through regulation of imports, through marketing reorganization and through government subsidies. The farm workers, on the other hand, expressed disappointment that the minimum wage rates were maintained at so low a level. Some complaint was also raised over the failure to coordinate wage rates between adjoining counties and lack of complete effectiveness in measures of enforcement. However, in 1938 wages were nearly double the level preceding the first World War, and the real wages of male agricultural workers showed an increase of some 35 percent over the level of 1924 when the Agricultural Wages Acts came into effect. In addition to this, average weekly hours of work diminished during this period, the majority of farm workers received weekly half-holidays and additional pay for overtime; practices regarding the difficult matter of payments in kind were standardized; and the organization of workers and employers, in spite of adverse economic conditions, was stimulated.

In Ireland

In Ireland an Agricultural Wages Act, passed in November 1936, set up a Central Agricultural Wages Board, the chairman of which is also chairman of the committees of the "wage areas" into which Ireland was divided for purposes of the Act. The Central Wages Board was given power to fix minimum wage rates for agricultural workers after consulting the appropriate wage-area committee. Parliament retained the right to nullify such wage rates within 21 days. The first order issued under the Act came into force on August 9, 1937, when a flat minimum wage was laid down covering all the wage districts in Ireland.

The Irish system differs in principle from the English system in that it is the Central Wages Board and not the local committee which has the authority to fix minimum wages and, also, in the lack of any assumption, in the Irish legislation, that employers and workers are organized. 181/

2. Government Regulation in the United States

In the United States minimum wage legislation, based upon the principles of the British Act of 1909, was initiated in Massachusetts in 1912. By 1923 some 17 States had laws of this kind. After the Adkins decision of the Supreme Court in 1923, which declared unconstitutional a minimum wage statute of the District of Columbia, there was a lull until 1937, when the Supreme Court reversed its earlier decision. In May 1940, 26 States, the District of Columbia, Alaska, and Puerto Rico had minimum wage laws, but all of these, with the exception of the Oklahoma statute, apply only to women and minors.

No State has a minimum wage law that applies to agricultural field workers. In California, Oregon, and Washington there is a minimum wage order for women and minors in fresh-fruit packing; and California had an order covering agricultural occupations, but it was rescinded in 1922.

Under 12 of the present 29 laws agricultural labor could be covered, since it is not specifically exempted. Orders, if issued, could however apply only to women in three of these States, and to women and minors of both sexes in the remaining nine. In no case could orders in any State apply to adult male farm workers.

The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, which aims at establishing a floor for wages and a ceiling for hours in the United States generally, does not apply to agricultural laborers.

The only instance of agricultural wage setting by Federal law is that embodied in the Sugar Acts of 1934 and 1937. The Act of 1934, known as the Jones-Costigan Amendment to the Agricultural Adjustment Act, gave the Secretary of Agriculture the power to determine the total flow of sugar into the United States market, to establish production quotas for continental and off-shore producers, and to make payments to producers of sugar beets and sugar cane who cooperated in the program. Among the conditions which producers had to satisfy in order to receive such payments were provisions relating to wage rates, the time and method of payment, the adjudication of labor disputes, and the employment of children below the age of 14 years.

The Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 contained no provisions relating directly to the establishing of labor standards for agricultural workers, nor was the inclusion of such standards

contemplated during the period prior to its enactment. The inclusion of labor provisions in the Jones-Costigan Act was, therefore, an innovation in agricultural legislation.

The need for the adoption of labor standards for sugar workers grew out of the disclosure of the distress of this group at the hearings on the subject of a Code for the Beet Sugar Industry under the N.R.A. in August 1933. In the spring of 1934 the Secretary of Labor noted that "wages for beet workers have fallen so deplorably that the government is financing workers even during their term of employment," and suggested that "if now the government is to give benefit payments to farmers, it seems only reasonable for the government to make it a condition of such benefit that the farmers shall do something to relieve the United States of the burden of caring for the farmer's own employees."

At the suggestion of the N.R.A. administrator, the President authorized the appointment of a committee "to take immediate steps to formulate with representatives of the beet sugar industry, the beet growers, labor and the public, a plan for reorganization of labor policies in the sugar beet fields."

This committee made the recommendations which formed the basis of the labor provisions of the Jones-Costigan Act.

Prior to the passage of the Sugar Act of 1937 the President stated: "It is highly desirable to continue the policy which was inherent in the Jones-Costigan Act, effectuating the principle that an industry which desires the protection afforded by a quota system or a tariff should be expected to guarantee that it will be a good employer. I recommend, therefore, that the prevention of child labor and the payment of wages of not less than minimum standards be included among the conditions for receiving a Federal payment." 182/

Under the Act of 1934 the Secretary of Agriculture had the right to set minimum rates of wages and to determine the time and method of wage payment when and if the occasion arose. The policy was adopted of exercising this right only when the growers and laborers were themselves unable to come to terms. Wage rates were established under the 1934 Act only on one occasion: April 1935, for the beet-growing areas in the four States, Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Montana. Before the next season came around, the pertinent provisions of the Act had been invalidated as a result of the Supreme Court decision of January, 1936. Under the Act of 1937 wage determinations by the Secretary of Agriculture were made mandatory for all sugar beet and sugar cane

182/ United States Congress. House of Representatives, Recommendations Regarding Enactment of the Sugar Quota System. Document 156, 75th Congress, First Session, Washington, D. C., March 1, 1937.

producing areas. Accordingly, in 1937 and subsequent years "fair and reasonable" rates of pay were established for workers in these crops not only in continental areas, but also in Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and the Virgin Islands.

Substantial increases in rates were given the sugar workers under the wage provisions of the Sugar Acts, resulting in considerable increases in their incomes; however, the standards applied as to what constituted "fair and reasonable" wage rates took into account in the utmost detail all available data as to the relation of wage rates to the returns from beets and cane received by the growers in previous years. The determinations of the Secretary of Agriculture, in other words, represented an effort to return from the low levels of the depression period, to the wage rates paid in more normal times. It was relatively easy to do this because of the fact that the growers of sugar beets and sugarcane were receiving payments under the Sugar Acts which reestablished their incomes from these crops on levels comparable with those received before the depression. And the further fact that, through its control of the import quotas, the government was able to influence the price of sugar, underlay and serve as justification for, the whole proceeding. Had sugar, like cotton or wheat, been on an export basis the story would have been different.

3. Non-Governmental Regulation

The second method of wage regulation is based on arrangements, usually established by collective bargaining between farmers, organized or individual, and associations of laborers. The initial organization of agricultural laborers is a difficult undertaking, and the maintenance of an organized group offers still further obstacles, so collective bargaining in agriculture has hitherto achieved only limited success.

a. In pre-war Europe

In some countries agricultural trade unions have found it advisable to go no further in the direction of establishing terms of employment than to issue guiding principles to workers. In Denmark, for example, schedules of wage rates published twice a year, indicate what is regarded by the union as a reasonable wage. In Scotland, such schedules are drawn up by the union in collaboration with the employers. The rates, however, are not binding for individual farmers. In Czechoslovakia a system of this kind came into existence with the direct assistance of the State. ^{183/}

^{183/} Social Problems in Agriculture, op. cit. pp. 73-78.

Despite the difficulties of union organization, in some European countries, notably the Netherlands and Sweden, collective agreements have been arrived at by free negotiation between farmers' and workers' organizations without the support of any special legislation regulating agricultural wage rates. In the Netherlands the typical collective agreement is highly localized in character. In 1936 there were 326 of these, covering 20,677 farmers and 65,616 workers, as compared with only 66 such agreements covering 3,810 farmers and 15,185 workers in 1930. In Sweden, on the other hand, there is one national agreement covering southern and central parts of the country with which are connected local agreements negotiated by local branches of the national unions of employers and of workers, the wage rates being fixed in the latter. In June 1937 over half of the farms of over 100 hectares (247 acres) were affiliated with the employers' union.

In some countries collective bargaining in agriculture is definitely encouraged by the government. For example, in Czechoslovakia representatives of employers' and workers' organizations were periodically called together by the government to confer with each other and reach an agreement on guiding principles for employment in agriculture. In Poland special legislation was passed in order to encourage collective bargaining. In Italy, the Charter of Labor makes it obligatory for organizations of employers and workers, whether agricultural or industrial, to negotiate collective agreements, the provisions of which are applicable to employers or workers in the region, whether organized or not.

b. In Australia

It is interesting that in Australia, where arbitration of labor difficulties has been carried further than in any other country, the organization of workers is assumed to be the basis of procedure, since only an organization is entitled to claim an award by an arbitration court. In contrast to the usual procedure in European countries, however, the organizations of workers ordinarily do not themselves attempt to negotiate collective agreements with employers but appeal directly to the arbitration courts.

In the United States there has been no development of labor organizations in agriculture sufficiently powerful or permanent to conclude lasting agreements regarding wages. There have been numerous occasions in which by a strike, or a threat of strike, an organization of farm workers has secured higher wages for a given seasonal operation. Such concessions, however, have seldom been

- a. Legislative protection, both Federal and State, of farm workers in their right to organize, thereby ending violations of civil liberties and threats of the use of force and violence which in the past have been employed in many localities to discourage or counteract such organization.
- b. Continuity of employment in one area and the congregation of a large number of workers within that area. The typical "hired man" has such continuity, but such workers are usually scattered thinly through an area. The seasonal worker, on the other hand, though usually working together with masses of other farm workers, is mobile and does not remain long in any one area, unless sufficient work opportunity can be found there.

As more and more farms in given areas go over to large-scale and mechanized operations calling for the utilization of many hired workers, there is likely to be a growing tendency for such workers to become more or less resident and to organize so as to secure for themselves standards of living comparable to those enjoyed by workers employed in non-farming industries.

B. WAGE PAYMENTS AND COLLECTIONS

In 16 States the State Departments of Labor now have power to assist wage earners in the collection of wage claims which, in the opinion of the Departments, are valid and enforceable. ^{184/} However, some of these States (for instance, New Mexico, Utah and Wisconsin) specifically exclude agricultural workers from the scope of the law. The wage claim adjuster in Utah reports numerous letters and personal visits by agricultural laborers asking assistance which he is powerless to render. More than 12 percent of all claims filed in writing were from agricultural laborers. The Wisconsin Industrial Committee also has commented on the volume of these claims which it is without authority to collect.

California's law has meant millions of dollars saved for wage earners. In the single fiscal year 1938-39 the State Labor Commissioner's office collected over half a million dollars for claimants, of whom approximately 15 percent were agricultural workers, farm laborers, gardeners, fruit pickers and packers, milkers, and stablemen.

One difficulty, even where the powers of the labor department are adequate, is that rural workers can use its facilities less easily than urban workers. Farm workers are seldom familiar with labor laws and with the services of a department of labor, and are not within convenient reach of the offices.

A type of law often utilized by labor departments to secure the payment of wages due, is that which requires employers to observe regular pay days. Two States (Massachusetts and California) specifically include agricultural workers. In 9 States agriculture is tacitly included in the law without specific mention; in 13, the wage payment laws apply to corporations only; in 14, the laws apply in enumerated industries, not including agriculture.

This law is enforced by complaint rather than by inspection, so there is no difficulty in making this type of law applicable to farm labor, unlike other types of legislation which are hard to enforce because of the need for inspection. There is just as much reason to protect the agricultural worker against non-payment of wages as there is to protect any other type of employee.

^{184/} Arkansas, California, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and Rhode Island.

C. HOURS OF WORK

Federal legislation, limiting the hours of work, specifically excludes agricultural labor from its coverage.

State legislation, with a few exceptions, also excludes agricultural labor, as far as limiting the length of the working day is concerned. With the exception of Vermont and Hawaii, all States and Territories have passed such laws applying to men in private employment, in certain enumerated industries including employment on public works projects, the transportation industry where the public safety is involved, and certain occupations which are considered dangerous and unhealthy. Only Puerto Rico includes agriculture as coming under the 8-hour-day law. The other States and jurisdictions do not take in agriculture, either through the failure to include it specifically under the listed occupations or through specific exclusion.

In nearly all the States, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, measures have been passed designed to protect women from unduly long hours of work in certain enumerated employment. Only three States (Mississippi, Nevada, and Utah) and Puerto Rico apparently do not exclude women engaged in agriculture. This inclusion appears to be merely nominal, as approximate orders have not been issued, nor have the laws been enforced for the benefit of women workers on the farms. 185/

185/ Legislative protection of child workers in agriculture is discussed briefly on pp. 43-44.

D. WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION LAWS

Experience with workmen's compensation laws in this country covers a period of about 25 years. Such laws are designed to give an injured worker prompt medical care and money payments at a minimum of expense and inconvenience, and to relieve the employer from liability for damage suits. Before the enactment of such laws the only recourse available to an injured worker was a damage suit based upon the common law principle of negligence. Under this procedure the injured employee had to prove not only that the accident resulted from the employer's negligence but that he himself had not assumed the risk of injury and that the accident had not resulted from his own or a fellow employee's negligence. Under workmen's compensation the question of blame for the accident is not raised. The cost of work injuries is considered part of the cost of production; the employer may insure his liability either with a private insurance company or a State fund. Most States also allow self-insurance.

None of the compensation laws attempts to cover all employments. Moreover, in 25 States, in Alaska, and in Puerto Rico employers of fewer than a stipulated number of employees are exempt; the "minimum exemptions" range from less than two employees in Oklahoma to less than 16 in Alabama.

The Accident Hazard in Agriculture. There is no systematic accident reporting for agricultural employment, largely because of lack of coverage by workmen's compensation laws, and for that reason, comparisons of frequency and severity rates with other industries are not possible. Nevertheless indications are that agriculture is a decidedly hazardous employment.

"More people are killed in the course of farm work than in any other one industry", says the National Safety Council. ^{186/} Occupational deaths in agriculture were estimated at 4,500 in 1937, which represented over one-fourth of the total fatalities in all industries and more than twice the number killed in manufacturing industries -- although the employment in the latter is more than one-third greater than in agriculture. ^{187/} In 1936, 6,100 agricultural workers received permanent disabilities (partial and total), and 253,000 were temporarily disabled. ^{188/} In 1937, it is estimated, there were 13,500 permanent injuries and 252,000 temporary disabilities in agriculture. ^{189/}

^{186/} National Safety Council, Accident Facts, 1939.

^{187/} 1930 Census - Number gainfully employed in agriculture, 10,482,323; in manufacturing and mechanical industries, 14,317,535.

^{188/} Monthly Labor Review, July 1938, p. 20.

^{189/} U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Problems of Workmen's Compensation Administration in the U. S. and Canada, Bulletin No. 672, p. 37.

In Wisconsin, during 1938, 526 workmen's compensation cases in agricultural employment were reported to the Industrial Commission and probably many others were not reported. The largest group of injuries (168) occurred to farm hands on general farms: grain threshing and hay baling accounted for 80 accidents; dairy farms, 57; fruit growing and orchard work, 47. In California, 10,333 tabulatable accidents occurred to agricultural workers during a single year (1938).

It is a common belief that accidents which occur on the farm are usually of a minor nature. The experience of a number of States does not support this belief. In Minnesota, the duration of temporary total disability reported is as long for accidents in agriculture as for many other types of employment. The compensation costs, however, ran much lower on the average, except for accidents in operating agricultural machinery, which are evidently apt to be extremely serious, for they averaged \$1,115 per case. Only three groups of industries exceeded this figure--mining, ore reduction and smelting, rolling mills and steel works. The average for all industries are \$208. The average medical expense per case was higher in general farming than the general industry average:

General Farming	\$ 44
Dairy farming	17
Stock farming	32
Garden and truck farming	25
Operating agricultural machinery	<u>143</u>
Average all industries	\$32 <u>190/</u>

In Ohio, in 1929, there was 1 fatality for every 77 claims filed; in agriculture, 1 for every 42 claims filed. In that State accident trends in agriculture have been growing worse whereas there has been marked improvement in industry.

Such data indicate the need for workmen's compensation, both to assure the injured worker and his dependents medical care and hospitalization and some support in place of lost wages, and also to serve as a basis for accident prevention work. It would seem that there is just as much reason to apply the principles of workmen's

190/ Minnesota Industrial Commission. Twenty-fifth Biennial Report of the Department of Labor and Industry, 1935-1936. (St. Paul) (1936).

compensation--which have been accepted in industry for a generation--to injuries arising out of agricultural employment as to those arising in the course of other types of employment. A leg injury from a cutting tool used in harvesting is just as disabling as one sustained in a factory. Boiler explosions sometimes occur on farms--as do injuries from falls, falling objects, injuries caused by animals, tractors, and motor vehicles. In fact a modern farm uses a great deal of complicated machinery. Harvesting and picking involve lifting and carrying heavy objects, such as crates loaded with fruits and vegetables, the use of knives and other cutting tools.

If agriculture were to be treated in the same manner as other types of employment, coverage even then would not be complete. There are still very large gaps in the coverage of nonagricultural workers under workmen's compensation laws. It is estimated that in 1938 one-third of all those employed in mechanical, manufacturing and mining industries (which everyone would agree are hazardous) were excluded from coverage by exemption of employers having less than a certain number in their employ. In addition, many establishments are omitted because more than two-thirds of the laws are elective instead of compulsory, and many employers do not elect to come under them; still others neglect to insure their risks. Thus, if agriculture were given the same treatment as industry, there would still be many unprotected workers, until such time as the laws are improved in these respects.

Only four States, at the present time, however, treat agricultural employment on the same basis as nonagricultural employment. These States are Connecticut, New Jersey, Ohio, Vermont. In addition, California, which has a compulsory type of law for nonagricultural employment, permits agricultural employers to elect coverage and presumes that they do so elect if their pay rolls exceed \$500 a year. Even in these States, not all agricultural workers are covered.

No State has issued a code of safety regulations designed to apply to farm machinery.

Eight States provide for coverage of certain types of agricultural employment connected with machinery--harvesting, threshing, silage cutting, and cotton ginning and baling 191--either by law, administrative ruling, or court interpretation. Forty-two State workmen's compensation laws exclude or fail to cover agricultural employment (save for the few mechanical operations already referred to). Thirty-one of the 42 permit agricultural employers voluntarily to come under the Act, but 11 do not even permit voluntary election.

It is not known to what extent agricultural employers elect coverage under the permissive acts. Judging by experience in industry,

191 Kentucky, Louisiana, Arizona, Minnesota, New York, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

however, the probability is that in the absence of compulsion or strong inducement, few take the trouble to comply and to insure their risks.

Further extension of the State workmen's compensation laws to agricultural laborers is highly desirable, but at present the tendency seems to be in the opposite direction. In 1937 the State of Florida excluded the following from its workmen's compensation law, which already excluded agricultural and horticultural farm labor and canning: "the production and distribution by producer of dairy products, and all labor employed in the production and handling of agricultural and horticultural products in their natural or fresh state and whether the same be engaged in picking, gathering, harvesting, processing, packing, canning, or handling thereof, or in the hauling of same from the grove or field to the packing house or cannery."

Along these lines there can also be noted the exemption from workmen's compensation laws in Oklahoma of construction, repair or demolition of farm buildings. In Virginia, machinery used on farms is exempted from the safety laws.

In Puerto Rico, since 1925, there has been practically full coverage of farm workers under workmen's compensation, but operation of the law has not been very successful because adequate rates have not been maintained and premiums have not been collected.

Thus, mere inclusion of farm workers under workmen's compensation laws is not enough. Provision must be made for adequate administrative machinery and maintenance of standards.

E. SOCIAL INSURANCE

Since organized society has come to recognize a social responsibility in these matters, and since wage earners are themselves frequently unable to provide the resources out of which their needs can be met, in some countries the insurance principle has been expanded by making contribution compulsory rather than voluntary, and modified by making the employer, or the State, or both, contributors to the funds from which benefits are paid to insured workers.

Accidents, for example, are bound to occur where machinery is used and one may therefore conclude that industry, and ultimately the consumer of the goods produced, rather than the injured worker, should bear the costs. Thus the entire burden of an accident compensation system may be placed upon the employer, as the party best able to bear it temporarily, and ultimately perhaps to pass it on, as well as to take such measures as will reduce the accident hazard in the plant to a minimum. In a system of insurance against illness or unemployment on the other hand, it may seem desirable to have the costs divided between the workers and the employers, though in some countries the State also contributes.

The extension of the benefits of social insurance to industrial workers has proceeded rapidly during the last half century. Given their first great impetus in Germany in the eighties under Bismark, during the next three decades measures designed to furnish a cushion against the impact of sickness, accident and old age were adopted in most of the European countries. England pioneered in unemployment insurance in 1911; her system has been gradually extended until it now covers over 13 million workers, including those in agriculture. Germany introduced unemployment insurance in 1927. In 1939 there were 9 nations with optional plans for subsidizing trade union and unemployment relief societies and 11 with governmentally subsidized unemployment insurance systems of a compulsory character; many European countries had workmen's compensation acts, frequently including agricultural workers. Eighteen nations now have some system of governmentally instituted compulsory illness insurance.

In this elaborate network of social insurance legislation in foreign countries, the agricultural workers have been included only to a limited degree. The difficulties of doing so are numerous. Political considerations are among these. Industrial employers may

be expected to oppose legislation calling for contribution. But the chances of overcoming such opposition are greater if it is not reenforced by similar opposition from the farmers of the country. ^{192/} Hence, to enlist agricultural support for social insurance of any kind, it frequently has seemed necessary to exempt agriculture from such insurance. Furthermore, serious administrative difficulties grow out of the widely scattered character of agricultural employment (as compared, for example, with work in factories), from its frequently seasonal character, and from the fact that agricultural workers are often paid partly in kind, partly in cash. Finally, it often appears, even to proponents of social insurance, that there is in agriculture no need for this protection comparable to the need in industry. In most of the western countries in which systems of social insurance have come into being, the number of bona fide agricultural wage earners (as distinct from the number of members of farm owners' families) constitutes only a small percentage of the gainfully occupied of the country. Moreover, regular farm hands have relatively steady employment.

The fact that despite these difficulties in a modern industrialized country like Great Britain, farm workers in recent years have been included in systems of unemployment insurance and old age insurance is evidence of the feeling that after all the position of the farm worker when unemployed, injured, ill, or without support in old age, differs, if at all, only in degree from that of the urban worker, and that if effective administration is possible, justice demands equal treatment in such matters. Furthermore, in some countries there has been much concern over what has been called "the flight from the land," one manifestation of which is a relative shortage of farm workers. It was felt that to deny to farm workers the benefits of social legislation enjoyed by industrial workers would increase the attractiveness of employments, away from the land and lead to further "flight".

In the United States the development of a comprehensive system of insurance for the protection of wage earners against the unavoidable vicissitudes of life is only now beginning, after the passage in 1935 of the Social Security Act. For several decades after such legislation had become characteristic of western industrialized countries, prevailing opinion in the United States remained opposed. In 1928 unemployment compensation was still being stigmatized as the "dole" system and called alien to the genius of America, whose rugged individualism and abundant resources were pointed to as assurances that every worthy person could "provide for a rainy day". Failure to do so was prima-facie proof of personal shiftlessness. True, some circles held it was wrong to underestimate the importance of unemployment to the average working class family, and equally wrong to accept the seemingly fatalistic attitude ascribed to

^{192/} Douglas, Paul H., Standards of Unemployment Insurance, Social Service Monograph No. 19. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 111. 1933. pp. 48-49.

supporters of the European unemployment insurance systems--namely, that unemployment was neither preventable nor reducible. Hence the development of what was regarded as a characteristically American approach to the unemployment problem,--that of prevention, as embodied in such pioneer schemes as the Wisconsin Unemployment Compensation Act of 1932. This plan, however, lacked real opportunity to prove itself under drastic circumstances ushered in by the depression which began in 1929. After an unprecedented outpouring of relief to destitute unemployed, the need revealed led to the passage of the Social Security Act of 1935, which provides for the development of a comprehensive system of old age assistance, unemployment insurance, and aid for certain special needy groups.

1. Unemployment Compensation.

Under the Social Security Act of 1935 cooperation is provided for between the States and the Federal Government in the establishment of State unemployment compensation laws. If such a State law meets a few general requirements, and so is approved, the administrative costs are covered by a grant from the Federal government. The Social Security Act also provides for a Federal excise tax on employers who employ 8 or more workers for certain specified periods. Employers in States with approved unemployment compensation laws are allowed credit against the Federal tax levied in Title IX of the Act for State contributions made under an approved unemployment compensation law.

The Social Security Act, Title IX, relating to unemployment compensation, originally exempted "agricultural labor," without more precise definition. The State laws did likewise. But this proved too vague for purposes of payroll and excise tax collection. The

Treasury Department's Bureau of Internal Revenue, hence, issued regulations defining agricultural labor and State administrative agencies followed suit. 193/

As in the case of the exclusion of agricultural laborers from other forms of legislation protection, difficulties of administration were advanced as the reason for barring them from the Federal Social Security Act. It was alleged, for example, that small farm employers would find it hard to keep satisfactory payroll records for purposes of tax collection especially where perquisites constituted a substantial portion of the wages paid to farm hands. Even if such records were kept, it was argued, collection of taxes would be arduous and expensive in view of the employment of farm labor in rural sections situated considerable distances from commercial centers. It was further pointed out that the migratory-casual farm worker with his short-term job and frequent movement across State lines, could be handled administratively under an insurance plan only with great difficulty.

The Committee on Economic Security appointed by the President in 1934 to make recommendations for a Social Security program in the United States, must have considered all these arguments. Nevertheless it "felt that agriculture should not be excluded as an industry--the large agricultural operations should be covered." 194/ In the end, Congress did not include any agricultural workers.

It appears, however, that in excluding agricultural workers from the Federal Social Security Act, Congress did not necessarily intend this exclusion to be permanent. It charged the Social Security Board with "the duty of studying and making recommendations as to the most effective methods of providing economic security through social insurance." 195/ In accordance with this Congressional mandate, after three years of study and experience, the Board submitted a report to Congress and to the President in which it stated: 196/

193/ United States, Treasury Dept., Bur. of Internal Revenue. Regulations 90 relating to the Excise Tax on Employers under Title IX of the Social Security Act, Washington, D. C. Government Printing Office, 1936.

194/ United States, Congress, Senate, Economic Security Act, Hearings before the Committee on Finance, 74th Congress, First Session, on S. 1130, Jan. 22-February 20, 1935 (Revised). Washington, D. C., 1935. See testimony by Edwin E. Witte, Chairman of the President's Committee on Economic Security, p. 219.

195/ Social Security Act of 1935, Public Law No. 271, 74th Congress, Title VII. Section 702.

196/ United States. Congress. House of Representatives. Report of the Social Security Board Recommending Changes in the Social Security Act, House Document 110, 76th Congress, First Session, Washington, D. C., January 1939, p. 9. See also testimony by Arthur J. Altmeyer, Chairman, Social Security Board in Social Security Act Amendments, Hearings on H. R. 6635 before the Senate Committee on Finance, 76th Congress, First Session, Washington, D. C. June 12, 13, 14, 15, 26, and 29, 1939, p. 17.

"It is recognized that the complete inclusion of employees engaged in agricultural labor is fraught with great administrative difficulties. However, the Board believes that the inclusion of large-scale farming operations, often of a semi-industrial character, probably would reduce rather than increase administrative difficulties."

Accordingly, the Board recommended "that the language of the present exception relating to 'agricultural labor' (under the old age insurance and unemployment compensation titles of the Act) be modified to make it certain that this exception applies only to the services of a farm hand employed by a small farmer to do the ordinary work connected with his farm." It further recommended that "with a reasonable time allowed before the effective date, the 'agricultural labor' exception be eliminated entirely." 197/

At about the same time, similar findings and recommendations were made by an Advisory Council on Social Security appointed in May 1937 by the Senate Committee on Finance and the Social Security Board. This council, whose task was to study the advisability of amending the 1935 Act for the purpose of extending old age insurance to groups which up to that time were excluded, reported as follows: 198/

"Recent studies indicate that the additional cost of extending coverage of the system (to farm wage workers) 199/ will be considerably less than originally estimated since a larger number of such workers are already coming under the system through employment in covered occupations on a seasonal or part-time basis. Intermittent coverage of this character is not only unsatisfactory in the benefits afforded but is a factor of uncertainty in financing the program."

Accordingly, the Council stated that the coverage of farm employees under the Federal Old Age insurance program was desirable, and recommended that it take effect by Jan. 1, 1940 200/ if administratively possible.

197/ Ibid. pp. 9, 17.

198/ United States, Senate, Advisory Council on Social Security: Final Report. December 10, 1938, Senate Document 4, 76th Congress, First Session, Washington, D. C. 1939.

199/ The full statement included also domestic employees in its recommendations.

200/ Advisory Council on Social Security, op. cit., p. 22.

Despite these recommendations, Congressional amendments to the Social Security Act in 1939 not only failed to include the services performed on the large-scale industrialized farms, but by broadening the definition of the term "agricultural labor", exempted from coverage under both old age insurance and unemployment compensation, an estimated 300,000 to 500,000 additional persons 201/ (engaged in the commercial harvesting of crops or in processing, packing, packaging and other preparing of farm products for markets).

Comparatively few State legislatures have as yet had opportunity to revise their laws since the Federal amendments were enacted on August 10, 1939, at which date practically all of the 1939 sessions were over, and in 1940 only 8 legislatures convened in regular session. The great majority of States are still operating under the old definition. If these amendments are adopted in State laws the effect, in the words of the Chairman of the Social Security Board will probably be, "to exclude persons employed by nonfarm employers such as large scale business firms that purchase and harvest an entire crop" (such as chain stores or commission houses) The new language is also intended

"to provide exemption for central plants that clean, grade, pack, and prepare products for market, store and transport the products to market or a carrier. In the case of fruits and vegetables, the exemptions are intended to services 'incident to marketing' which is intended to include preparation and transportation to a carrier or market, whether done by a group of producers or by a commercial handler

"The regulations (also) specifically except farmers' cooperatives with respect to marketing as well as handling, planting, drying, packing, packaging, processing, freezing, grading, and storing, even though 49 percent of the produce handled is on behalf of nonmembers" 202/

Such sweeping exemptions are prejudicial, not only to farm workers but to large groups of employees of industrialized concerns handling agricultural products.

It is argued, of course, that inclusion of such workers tends to increase the merchandizing spread between producer and consumer and thus to lower prices to farmers or result in a smaller retail demand. This argument exaggerates the effects of such workers'

201/ Estimates of the Social Security Board.

202/ Letter A. J. Altmeyer written May 2, 1940, to Honorable John W. McCormack, House of Representatives, Washington, D. C., in Congressional Record, Vol. 86, Pt. 5. May 3, 1940, p. 5488.

benefits upon the prices the farmer receives for his products, and it ignores the important effect on such prices of the consumers' power to buy. Recipients of benefits from such compensation plans bulk large among the consumers of farm products.

Exclusion of some classes of farm workers from the benefits of the Federal Social Security Act may, possibly be justified by: (1) administrative difficulties connected with the scattered nature of bona fide agricultural operation, (2) the high ratio of employers to employees, and (3) the prevalence of systems of partial payment in kind, perquisites. In such matters, effectiveness of administration, and that alone, should be the determining factor. To employees of processing, packing, handling and distributing concerns, however, such considerations do not apply, for no unusual administrative difficulty is involved.

No doubt it is tenable that farm laborers need assistance to achieve an improved economic status and a greater degree of security. So far as administratively practicable, such legislative aid should be granted them.

There is need for better knowledge of the relevant aspects of rural life and for more careful investigation of the techniques to be employed if the economic insecurity of farm laborers is to be dealt with on a social insurance basis.

With reference to the present law, (which applies only to employers of eight or more workers for 20 or more days, each in a different calendar week), it is to be noted that even if agricultural workers were not specifically excluded, relatively few of them would be included. In January 1935 the Census reported only 16,840 farms employing as many as or more than 8 workers,--that is, only 1.74 percent of the farms which hired labor and 0.25 percent of all farms. Later in the season the number of such farms would be greater, but even so it can hardly be maintained that the burden upon agriculture would be a crushing one.

2. Old-Age Insurance

Federal old-age benefits as established by the Social Security Act, are administered, not by the States, as in the case of unemployment compensation, but by the Federal government. Agricultural laborers are excluded from participation in these benefits, also, and presumably on similar grounds. In the case of old age assistance the administrative difficulties are much less troublesome. Some of the problems that do not arise here are:

- (a) the need to be able to establish the past existence of a definite employer-employee relationship in order to define employment status

- (b) the need to determine the availability and competence for "suitable" work of the claimant for benefit in order that he may be reemployed as quickly as possible
- (c) the necessity for maintaining a network of public employment offices.

It is worthy of note that in Great Britain agricultural labor was included in both the contributory health and the old age insurance systems from their first enactment in 1911 and 1925, respectively. In that country this development was aided by the prior existence of "approved societies", which were made the administrative vehicle for these schemes. No such local groups exist generally in the United States.

In closing this discussion of farm workers and of social insurance methods, the words of the Committee on Economic Security in its Report to the President may be quoted:

"Agricultural workers, domestic servants, home workers and the many self-employed people constitute large groups in the population who have generally received little attention. In these groups are many who are at the very bottom of the economic scale. We believe that more attention will have to be given to these groups than they have received heretofore. We cannot be satisfied that we have a reasonably complete program for economic security unless some degree of protection is given these groups now generally neglected." 203/

203/ United States, Congress, House of Representatives, Message - the President Recommending Legislation on Economic Security. House Document 81, 74th Congress, First Session. Washington, D. C. January 1935, P. 40.

